

LONDON THE READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 297.—VOL. XII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 16, 1869.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MARKE'S ESCAPE.]

THE FLAW IN THE DIAMOND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlingcourt's Will," "Leaves of Fate," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN the carriage containing the Rev. Mr. Whitehead, now so completely metamorphosed, passed the Quaker on the road to A—, the occupants of it had only given a careless glance, and Mr. Broad had kept so far in front, they could scarcely see his face. The carriage rolled on. The horseman followed leisurely, rubbing his forehead now and then in deep thought, and muttering:

"There must be a way, there must be a way, and I must find it. It is an old story drugging tea and coffee; but why may it not answer once more? Or shall I, like some young hero, scale walls, and mount windows, and taking the poor distressed damsel in my arms, fly away with her? White-car, I know Aaron Peaseley will say, could outchase young Lochinvar himself! Well, this is the problem, and I must find the key; for there is a way, there must be a way."

The landlord of the little inn, with its swinging sign of an elk's head, was put into a flutter by the arrival of the grand-looking coach, and still more aristocratic-looking master, who, in the most pompous manner, registered the names of Colonel Mark Falkinstone, son, and daughter.

The landlady and her maid were speedily flying about, hunting up the best the house afforded for the suppers of the travellers. Mine host, seeing the horseman following after, and talking familiarly with the driver of the carriage, took him for one of the party, and shrewd Abiatha Broad did not undecieve him.

He was moreover speedily in the midst of a confidential talk with the driver.

"The black colt, you know her? Sho! well, she is a good bargain; for all I know that gawky gray of yours has got more speed and endurance. You must have the old Quaker's confidence, or he'd never

trust that horse of his with you. I found out, when I tried to buy it, 'twasn't any use. He made it seem like a human being, instead of a dumb animal. Come, now, I wish you'd speak a word towards his letting me have her. For to them that ain't sharp to see, she looks as if any common horseflesh could run away from her, but, I can tell you, I'd risk all I've got on the creature."

"Yes; White-car knows how to get over the ground. I'll speak to friend Aaron about it. So you own your team yourself. It looks as if it belonged to the gentleman."

"Yes, I know; that where I make the good thing. I keep it to let in this way, and drive it myself. People as wants to make a respectable appearance will give more, you see."

"He looks like someone of importance. How did he find you?"

"'Twas the young one. He came down to our place, on the rail, and asked where he could find a carriage, and they sent him to me. And then he made me drive a good piece, in a queer way, looking along the stopping-places, but we found this old gentleman and the lady after a while, and then we came on at a smart trot. It was curious though, when we left that other place the gentleman told the landlord he was going to D—, and, I'll be blest, if we didn't drive a little way on that road, then whip into another turn, and come back on just this other track."

"These great folks have a way of changing their minds," was Abiatha's dry retort.

And presently he sauntered into the other room, but found it empty. Mine host was in the kitchen, looking himself after the guests' repast. The young man came down shortly, and, after a turn across the room, he walked to the window, and stood there, drumming on the pane, and whistling. The keen eyes of Abiatha took notice of his square, compact frame, and athletic proportions. He saw, also, the diamond finger-ring, and the massive gold chain, but he dwelt longest on the ugly look of the evil, sensual mouth, the narrow forehead, and the bleaching eye, which could not meet an honest look fairly.

"Poor lamb! Poor lamb among wolves," thought Abiatha Broad; "thou shalt have help somehow before this night is gone."

The aristocratic Colonel Falkinstone descended presently, and at a look of his, his son repaired to the room they had taken for a private sitting-place, to keep guard, as Abiatha readily understood, over the helpless girl.

He went out of doors again, hunted about for the village doctor, and obtained a powerful opiate from him. When he returned to the inn yard he sauntered around the house, took a look at all the windows, and discovered the pale, beautiful face at an upper pane. This satisfied him of her locality, and he sauntered on farther until he found the kitchen door.

Shivering as with a chill, he asked if he might come in and warm himself, and received a gracious permission. He had diplomacy enough to take a seat as much out of the way as possible, and made himself useful in tending the fire, and finally volunteered to turn the chickens, roasting on the spit, which quite won the cook's good will. So that she gave no heed, when he began poking at the coffee-pot, lifting the lid, and praising its steaming flavour, beyond suggesting one had need to beware of being burnt.

When the dinner was ready to be taken up, the new assistant declared himself nicely over his chill, and asked to be told where he was to sleep that night. He knew very well they were all too busy to attend to him, and was only too thankful to be sent to find the room by their direction. He had paused to write a line on a tiny slip of paper, which he crumbled into a little roll, and held under his thumb as he mounted the stairs. The pseudo colonel was still below. He could hear his measured tramp across the room. There was only the young man in the way.

Our wily Quaker considered a moment, then pushed on, and boldly opened the door of the room in which he expected to find the girl. He had made a mistake, it was empty, and was a bed-chamber. He closed the door softly and tried the next. The

young girl was there, sitting at the window with crossed arms resting on the sill, and her head drooping down to them. Before her, with an angry, glowering look in his eyes, was the young man, who turned around upon him with an oath.

"I beg your pardon. I was trying to find my way to the room allotted me," said the Quaker, with the most natural appearance of trepidation, "I—I was sure this was it. They said the door on the right. Where does this lead? I didn't mean to intrude."

He crossed the room as he spoke with an awkward but rapid gait, and passed the window in doing it. The hand towards her held a little wisp of scarlet fringe, and the slip of paper. When he darted back, finding the door he tried only to be a closet, he knew by her quick glance that she understood his dumb telegraphing. He stood looking about him evidently in a perfect panic, ejaculating:

"Oh dear! which door did I come in at? What a place this is!"

The girl rose promptly and crossed to the other door.

"This one," said she kindly "you need not be so disturbed, you have done no harm."

As she spoke she pointed to the door, and in doing so dropped her handkerchief.

The Quaker stooped quickly, wrapped the paper by a swift movement in the thin square of delicate lawn, handed it to her and, amidst the young man's peal of coarse uproarious laughter, darted out of the room.

He drew a long breath, found the right room, and sat down there, to think out again another step in his plot.

The girl meanwhile had resumed her seat at the window, and her bowed attitude, but she managed to unfold the paper, open it on the palm of her hand, and read:

"Thou must have sharp eyes and watch the window. Above all things drink no coffee down below." She caught her breath nervously.

"Wall," said the young man, whose present name was announced as Mr. Sydney Falkinstone, "that was a green specimen, to be sure. You were very polite, Mabel, I would recommend you to save a little of your good nature, however; for me, who have a claim to it."

"Dinner!" announced a voice below, and the elder gentleman appeared in a moment, echoing the call with a well-satisfied ring of voice.

"Let me have my dinner here. I am ill, tired, discouraged," faltered Mabel.

Mr. Whitehead of the stage-coach gave her a sharp glance, but she met it boldly.

"I shall lock the doors and take the key with me," he said, "you will have no chance to try the running away trick again."

"Lock them," returned she coldly. "I am willing, since I cannot help myself. You may send me a cup of tea."

"I will bring it," answered he, with a cruel smile. "I do not trust you, my dear, with silly servants or unbarred doors."

And he brought with his own hands the tray, well filled with such delicacies as the 'Elkhorn' provided, and left it with her, while he went out, locking the door behind him.

The Quaker heard, and was not slow to improve the opportunity. He crept stealthily to the door, and called softly:

"I am here—dost thou understand?"

He heard the rustle of her dress, almost the beating of her heart, as she came to the other side of the door, and leaned heavily against it.

"Is it you—my friend, the Quaker?" she asked, in a tremulous whisper.

"Yes, listen carefully. If they drink the coffee, it will be well. There will be a ladder under the window, where thou wast sitting to-night, near the stroke of twelve. Thou must come down without noise, and bring with thee the book that holds the stolen property."

"Ah! but he will keep it by him," she sighed back.

"Thou must find a way to get it, and to come down the ladder. That much thou must do thyself. The rest I will care for. I must go—some one comes."

"Oh, I will be brave. Heaven bless you, you have given me heart to be brave!" was the reply. "Do not desert me, help me, for the love of Heaven."

He made his retreat in time to escape the observation of the person ascending the stairs, and gave up the dinner, whose savoury perfume sorely tempted him. He only went downstairs again late in the evening, when he was watching about the stable, looking after the safety and comfort of his horse.

"And no wonder," said the coachman of the grand party, "that awkward looking gray is worth all the other animals in the place. Where was you, friend, at dinner time?"

"I had a bad cold, and they were good enough

to let me have a little toast and tea upstairs. I must hurry in now. Perhaps I shall ride your way in the morning," said the Quaker, and he hurried off to escape farther questioning.

CHAPTER VIII.

"ADA, my darling, you are a very fortunate girl," said Lady Harriet coming out from a bower of aristocratic mamma, who had been flattering and caressing their promising young member, until Morley Ashton was fain to beat a retreat, "you will be the envy of all the county when the engagement comes to be announced."

"I am very proud of my daughter's conquest," reiterated Sir Anson Donnithorne, earnestly, on his return from a political dinner, where all the wise and great men had been gathered. "Ashton's speech to-day was the clearest and ablest of any, and Lord Clives says he will rule the house in another year."

Pretty Ada blushed, smiled brightly, turned the glittering engagement ring so lately placed upon her finger, and quite agreed with them. It was very intoxicating and sweet to the emancipated school-girl to find herself floating on this sparkling current, the envy and observed of all. She pleased herself as a child might, saying to herself, all the famous belles must envy and lament. She enjoyed thoroughly seeing this grave, magnificent man stop short in the midst of his powerful arguments, while the pale, staid face flushed into warm life, sparkled with tender devotion, at a single glance or gesture of hers. It was as natural for Ada to enjoy, with coquettish triumph, the adulation of gentlemen, as for a kitten to purr. So she was happy now, and too full of giddy sentiment to pause to enquire into its source or meaning. One thing was perhaps a little significant. She enjoyed her lover very much better in company, before people to whom she could exhibit by a hundred innocent little manoeuvres, her power over him, than she did in the *titic-tits* which he managed to obtain now and then.

His manner, when they were alone, puzzled her, and though she scarcely understood it, Ada Donnithorne was a little afraid of him.

Thus, when one day he held her little nervous hand in his, and stood looking down silently upon his betrothal ring, sparkling on her taper finger, he suddenly looked up into her face with those grave, deep eyes of his.

"Little Ada," said he, "do you know when I look at the ring there, and think what it means, I am filled with a strange dread? Heaven knows I mean that diadem to work all its promises—be true gold, genuine diamonds for your future life—sunshine and gladness always. But we mortals are, after all, so thoroughly mortal. Such strange chances arise, beyond our power to foretell or avert. Ada, Ada, what if I take you, meaning to give you a flowery path under a sunny sky, and in some strange, inscrutable manner, I, your guide, lose the way, and the path leads over sharp rocks, into painful scenes, under a chilling sky, a pitiless storm? Oh, little Ada, what will you say to me then?"

Ada looked up into his quivering face with wide astonished eyes. She half shrank away.

"I don't understand you," said she, a little pettishly. "I should not like to be out in the rain, I never can climb over rocks. You must never take me to any such place!"

There passed a little, shuddering spasm over his face, a cloud settled upon his forehead. He was both pained and grieved.

Ada saw that something was wrong. She had however but one resource, and for the present that was potent. She put on her prettiest, most charming smile, she tossed back the golden-tinged curls, and held out to him that dainty hand, with its fingers tipped with a rose-leaf's tinge.

"Come," said she, "oh, Morley, come down and see the flowers that are to take the prize at the Horticultural Fair! Mamma is going to send them in my name. What shall I give you out of the prize money?"

Ah, this sweet, charming, infantine beauty of pink cheeks contrasting with white brow, starry eyes, coral lips, and dancing tresses of glossy hair, how powerful it is! Youth's magic talisman, indeed! Morley Ashton forgot the momentary chill of disappointment and vague foreboding. He drew the graceful creature closer to his side, imprisoned the fair, white hand, and went down to the gardens with her, laughing and joyous.

But Ada Donnithorne shrugged her white shoulders, more than once, at the remembrance of it.

"What ever shall I do, if he has such moods, and I cannot smile him out of it? I wish—I declare I do wish he wasn't so dreadfully wise, and learned, then I should understand something of what he means when he talks in that way."

Morley, recalling that little speech of hers, in the privacy of his chamber, sighed uneasily, and the pale, masterful face grew paler and sterner, and a deep melancholy crept into the fine dark eyes.

"What shall I do to silence this gnawing dread and foreboding?" he exclaimed, presently, rising up and striding to and fro. "It is worse than folly. I have laid out my path; I have walked in it, in the eyes of all men; it is too late to turn back. I cannot undo anything."

He folded his arms, and stared before him, as if facing some defying or menacing foe.

And then suddenly he flung up his arms; the haughty head dropped low upon his breast. His voice was a wail rather than spoken sentences.

"And yet—and yet, if I could turn back—if I could defy the worst, and be brave enough to bear the world's scorn and contumely. Oh, how sweet and restful it would be—were she only willing, content—I think it would be all I should need—a pure, tender woman's love and support! And yet I know I do not deserve it. It is that thought which haunts and frightens me."

He stretched out his hand, and with a bitter smile fixed his eyes on the ring which had been sent home that morning, and was shining now upon his finger.

"At least, I am not a hypocrite with myself. I chose for my signet the fair representative. I show to the world, if it will but have eyes to see, the flaw in the diamond."

He walked a little while longer to and fro. Then drank a glass of cold water, dashed a shower of the same cooling element across his forehead, and sat down again to his table, taking up the pile of letters and pamphlets, and looking them over, one by one.

The eagle gleam came slowly back into his eyes. Pride, ambition, all a man's most despotic passions returned to rule his mind.

"There is not a doubt of my resolution," he murmured, "and once in the house, I shall be chairman on that committee, and I will give them and myself no rest until that reform bill is passed. And then—half of Great Britain will bless my name. That is something. Surely, it is something that I devote myself only to noble measures, that I am the instrument of undoubted good to many—and many a one. Surely—" and again his eye went down, with that accompanying quiver of the features, to the signet-ring on the shapely hand—"surely, it must atone a little for the flaw in the diamond. One flaw—only one," he repeated, wistfully.

At that very moment his eye was caught by the large lettering of an advertisement in the newspaper lying half opened on the table. He caught it up, read it through with a swift, lightning glance, and exclaimed:

"Good heavens! good heavens! Is this a step farther—or a threatening blow?"

It was a brief paragraph, only this:—

"If the woman, Ruth Weston, who was housekeeper for the late Paul Barker, of Holly Bank, should see this, she will confer a great favour, as well as hear something to her advantage, by addressing A. X., L.—post-office."

Morley Ashton read the paragraph over at least three times, and with each reading his face settled into a more rigid determination, as well as an icier pallor.

Once a kind of hopeful gleam brightened over it.

"It may be a new effort of Blackwell's, my own lawyer!" he muttered. "I offered them a generous reward to find the woman for me. Some new clue may have come up, and they are taking this method of pursuing the matter. But no," he added, a moment after, "they would have written about it."

He was still a few moments longer, lost in deep thought, then drew towards him the gold and ebony ink tray, seized upon a sheet of paper, and wrote swiftly:

"To A. X., who advertises in the Times of the 16th.—Should your advertisement bring to light any communication, or knowledge of the whereabouts of that Ruth Weston, who was housekeeper at Holly Bank, be good enough to send word to one who has sought in vain for the woman these several years past. For which favour you may ask your own reward, from one who is much interested in Ruth Weston, and anxious to contribute in some way to her support.—MORLEY ASHTON, Ashton Villa, Chardon Valley."

He took a great deal of pains to write his name in full, and legibly. He folded it with swift, firm fingers, thrust it hastily into an envelope, and directed it to A. X., L.—post-office.

The letter was posted the next morning. The Honourable Mr. Ashton was always particular about his letters, and the valet did not marvel in the least that he watched this one into the post-office with his own eyes.

No response came to it, though the gentleman

watched the post feverishly, and kept a strict oversight of the columns of the *Times*.

Three weeks after he had another shock. A new advertisement appeared:

"To Ruth W—, of H—y B—k.—Where are you? I can't find a trace of you. I am safely ashore again, and no welcome. Write or send to 'Mark,' at the Hotel, G—Square."

The cold perspiration beaded the forehead of the Honourable Morley Ashton.

Who was this? The same, or another, searching for that mysterious woman? Somehow, it did not sound like the same person. He could not disengage himself from the impression that the advertisements came from two different sources. He had had enough of writing.

After fretting and fidgeting a day or two, he took a sudden resolution. Mr. Ashton packed his valises, made a few excuses to his mother and lady-love, and posted up to London.

He went promptly to the hotel pencilled on a card. "In answer to Mark's advertisement," and gave it to the clerk, who sent him with many an obsequious bow—for in London the promising young member was as well known as in his own county—into a private waiting-room.

While he sat there, nervously impatient, and anxious for the *déroulement*, the door opened, and a fresh-faced, handsome young man, eyes sparkling, cheeks glowing, with a bundle under his arm, redolent of that rich, romantic perfume which only tropic seas can give, came dashing into the room.

"Oh, Ruth—your naughty woman!" he exclaimed, in a joyous musical voice, and then paused, a blank cloud of disappointment and sorrow coming over his face. "I beg your pardon, sir, I thought—I had a card. There must be a mistake."

"Only on your part, sir," said Mr. Ashton, with that ready, winning grace of manner so peculiar to him. "I sent up the card to you, with the reason why I intruded upon you. Because of your advertisement. I also have been searching and seeking for this Ruth Weston. I am sorry that I disappointed you—you thought she had come?"

"I did, indeed. What has happened to her; where can she be?"

"That is the question which perplexes me. May I ask if this advertisement of last week is your first?"

"Certainly. I have only been in England a week. I went down to Holly Bank expecting to find her. I did not know the master there was dead."

"Did you ever live there? Is Ruth Weston a relative of yours?" questioned Mr. Ashton, closely scrutinising the ingenuous face of the youth.

Mark Daly coloured slightly.

"No, sir, Ruth was no relation, but she was my best friend. If I have lost her, then there is no one in England to welcome me."

"You have lived away from England then? Pardon me, I do not intend to be inquisitive; but our mutual anxiety to find this Ruth Weston certainly interests me in you."

"I have been in India, a private secretary, for several years. I was tired of the life, besides the death of my employer gave me the opportunity to make a change. Somehow I seemed drawn back to England. It is strange Ruth never wrote me that she had left Holly Bank. I am afraid she is dead."

Morley Ashton was not afraid of such a discovery. He thought, even while he had spoke, what a weight the positive certainty would take from his mind. But he had also some thought for this lonely youth. It was like his generous, benevolent disposition, when he said presently, in his kind, earnest voice:

"I like your appearance very much. I should be glad to secure your services for myself. My present secretary has hardly the capacity for any work. I can give him more suitable employment, with the same wages, and he will rejoice as well as I at the change."

Mark's frank face showed his surprise.

"I ought to have given you my name. It is Morley Ashton," continued the gentleman; and he added, hesitatingly. "I am the present owner of Holly Bank."

"And you live there?" asked Mark, eagerly.

"No, not at present. I am at Ashton Villa, in Chardon Valley. My writing is mostly copying letters and speeches. How does my proposition strike you?"

"I am very grateful to you for your kindness, sir. If you will give me a short time to hunt a little more for poor Ruth, I shall be glad to come."

"You may always have time for that object. I told you before how anxious I was to find her. Well, so then my visit here has not been without result. Here is our address. You may come down without giving notice, when you have given up the search."

"You are very good; I can show you my recommendations now, if you like."

Morley Ashton smiled—that smile which won so many a heart to him.

"My dear fellow, the only recommendation I ask I have read some time ago—your frank, honest countenance."

Of course Mark, so famous for his blushes, was crimson now. Mr. Ashton took leave of him, and went to the office of the *Times*. The magic talisman of gold soon had all hands looking up the circumstances of the advertisement for Ruth Weston. Who brought it? Sitting down closely, there was found one who remembered the circumstances. Oh, yes, he remembered the man; a tall, square-shouldered person, with trim, iron-gray whiskers, and blue glasses. The peculiarity about him was his eyes, for he did not seem to look through the glasses, and the clerk, being mounted on the platform above him, had seen that one was gray and the other gray only on one half the iris, the other half being bluish-green. Very peculiar eyes; that and the singularity of the advertisement had been impressed upon his mind.

Morley Ashton next proceeded to the L— post-office.

"Had any letters come for A. X.?"

The post-master burst into a laugh at the question.

"Yes sir, just one letter, and the gentleman in the blue glasses snatched it out of my hand like one mad, he was so eager for it; but when he read it, he swore a big oath, threw the letter down on the floor, stamped on it, and strode away. Here is the letter; would you like to see it?"

He handed into Morley's hands his own letter.

The latter went back to Chardon Valley more perplexed than ever.

"Mark was innocent enough; there was no trouble about his advertisement; but who was A. X.?"

CHAPTER IX.

MABEL, waiting there in the little chamber of the inn, counted the very moments with feverish impatience. How long it seemed ere silence settled over the house and the stable-yard! How long before the breathing in the next room grew deep and measured! She sat upon the end of the couch, her head against the wall, with both her hands clasped over her forehead, the slightest sound seeming to ring into her brain, as though brought by magnetic influence across the darkness. She was sure it was beyond midnight; when the old clock downstairs beat out for her its muffled strokes, and surprised her with the knowledge that it was only ten o'clock. She sighed wearily, tried to close her eyes, and woo patience. But in the tense, excited state of her nerves her eyes even refused obedience, and would insist upon opening, staring out blindly into the blank darkness. She sat motionless, though her attitude was numbing and painful; all her faculties seeming to have passed into her ears.

There were two breathings, one light and easy, the other loud and heavy, which came from the adjoining room. The door between was locked, like that of the one in her chamber leading into the corridor. The key of both, she knew, was in the pocket of her cruel gaoler. Was he asleep at last, or only feigning? Oh, if the good Quaker's plans should fail, if he should be discovered! Could she bear to lose this first ray of hope? She wondered if it would be possible for her to live, and be what they were preparing for, the wife of Sidney, the helpless confederate of these two reckless villains; all her life tied to them as now? It was so strange why people could not die under mental anguish, how they could live on under such terrible burdens. Hapless Mabel! There had been little indeed in her life for the last few years to win from her any love for it. And now that this blessed providence had come, promising not only escape, but kindly care, a loving home, it would be tenfold more intolerable.

There in the darkness, shrinking up against the wall, she clasped her hands, and lifted up her tearful eyes, praying heaven to favour this attempt, or to give her the wider, broader escape—into the grave.

And the hours dragged themselves away.

Really and truly the inn had become quiet, and was securely locked in slumber at an unusually early hour. The generous quantity of coffee provided for the guests accounted for the circumstance. After the strangers had left the table, mine host went out to profit by the still unemptied coffee-pot, his wife joined him, and when they had finished, there was still a little for the cook, and Dave the hostler.

"It's all owing to the young lady, and the t'other man, on the gray horse, not taking any," said Dave, with a grimace, "or you and I, Sally, wouldn't have come in for a cup of coffee just at bed-time. Seems to me the drags are bitter. Well, it's very strong. I hope it won't keep me awake, cause we must be up early."

Dave had his wish. There was nobody kept

awake by the coffee. The landlord and his wife would not have stirred, had a thief crushed to atoms every glass in the bar, every dish in the china closet. The stove might have exploded, and honest Sally would have still lain there on her leather bed, like a log in a bed of heather. Nor would Dave have responded, had all the horsemen in town shouted for their beasts.

More wonderful than this, there was no starting up with oaths and angry haste, when a step passed softly to Mabel's door, and a voice spoke quietly:

"Young lady, thou may'st open thy window. I am going below now, and shall have the ladder there speedily."

The two men beyond were fettered by a spell as powerful as that of prison bars.

Mabel sprang up, her heart in her mouth. But there was no need of fear. The coast was clear.

Abiatha Broad coolly let himself out, found the key of the stable door in his cunning hiding-place, brought out White-ear, saddled, and then came with the ladder.

Up above he saw a white figure, balancing itself on the window-sill. If it had not been dark he would have seen a pallid face, lit up with the fire of hope, nerved to the courage of desperation.

"Thou canst take time and have no fear. The book is with thee, I trust. We cannot go without that, and I be blameless."

"I have got it," answered she, and watched anxiously his attempts to raise the ladder.

It was not done without difficulty, but was finally accomplished. The girl came bounding down, and seized his hands.

"Heaven bless you! Heaven for ever bless you!"

Abiatha took the two trembling hands into his.

"And thee, too, my poor child," he said, tenderly. "Believe me, there shall be pleasanter paths for these tender feet. And now help me replace the ladder. The bird must be flown, and have left no sign behind. I made the hostler get it from the loft, on pretence of reaching the upper nail above White-ear's stall, last night, and he must find it in the same place."

After this was done, Abiatha lifted the girl to White-ear's saddle, and sat behind her himself, supporting her to the best of his ability.

They went out softly from the yard, the sagacious animal pricking up his ears, and lifting his feet daintily, as if he understood the secrecy of those unusual proceedings.

When they were once on the highway, Abiatha shook out the rein.

"Now, White-ear, thou mayst make good thy master's boasting. Let us see how soon we can be brought to safe harbour."

White-ear understood, and flung out these long limbs of his, stretched out that awkward, crane-like neck, and away they flew.

"Well done, well done," said Abiatha Broad, patting the steaming neck, when they slackened up at the first hill. "Aaron Peaseley is justified in his idolatry of a beast. White-ear, if thou hadst lived only for this night, it would be enough."

He left her safely at a small cottage, which, to her surprise, was uninhabited, although neatly and tastefully furnished. The Quaker did not seem surprised. He took a key from his pocket, walked in coolly, produced a light, and brought out provisions from a closet.

"Mrs. Wheaton, it seems, is away. Gone down to her relations in Dorset, I presume. Well, she allows me many liberties, and these need not fear an intrusion. Thou must make thyself comfortable in my absence. Thou wilt not be afraid to stay here alone?"

The girl shivered a little, but answered, bravely:

"No, no, if only they will not follow."

"Thou needest not fear that, nor have any trouble. Keep the doors locked and the shutters closed. If Mrs. Wheaton comes, tell her freely thy story; but I think thou wilt be unmolested. Go to bed and sleep tranquilly. As soon as I have seen how thy friends bear thy loss, and what they mean to do, I shall come to thee. I must lose no time in getting back to the inn."

She stretched out her hands with an unconscious grasp towards him.

"And if anyone comes—if anyone knocks, must I let them in?"

"No; for the rightful owner will not knock. She has her key, and will come in unbidden. Art thou afraid, who hast braved so much?"

"No, I will not be," answered she, hastily, "but I cannot forget that I am a weak woman, all alone."

"I must teach thee that no woman need to be weak. What! is it a little brute strength, or the brave, manly spirit which makes the difference between man and woman? Mrs. Wheaton stays here alone, and fears naught. See, why should it be that it is so much more dangerous for thee to go to thy

bed alone, than for me? If a thief or a murderer comes, he finds the man as powerless in slumber as a child, or a woman. It is not strength that avails but will, courage, dexterity. I must introduce thee to Mrs. Wheaton's defenders. Come."

He took her to a neat little chamber; opened a secret box made into the panel-work of the bedstead, and took out two tiny revolvers.

"Here my child, look at them. Verily they be terrible things. My brethren censure those who, wearing the garb of peace, touch them; but I am a singular person. I am led by divers paths. I say not but I have enemies. I confess to thee I carry one of these little defenders, whose power is beyond that of the biggest prize-fighter in the land, and I gave these to Mrs. Wheaton. Look then, if danger menaced—but it will not—could not thy slender finger, pressing on this delicate mechanism work as true and unerring flight for the ball as the best man amongst us? I am grieved to leave thee timorous. These must pluck up courage, and think only of what great dangers thou hast escaped."

"You are right, it is worse than wicked in me to be afraid here in this peaceful house. It is of men, not solitude, I should stand in fear. Do not delay another moment; I will lock the door after you."

A grand resolution shone over the pale, beautiful face. The Quaker looked a moment earnestly into the deep, dark eyes, and smiled.

"Yes, I will go; thou hast fought thy first battle with timidity and conquered. Hereafter thou wilt marvel to find how easy it is for a woman to have courage and be brave."

He bent down and kissed the fair forehead, and went off abruptly. The girl heard him lock the door after him, and the click of the key as he withdrew it; then came the regular thud of White-car's footfalls passing out of the yard down the street, echoing fainter and fainter, and ceasing at last.

She was alone—all alone. Ah, but with heaven, above! She knelt down, gently clasped her hands, and lifted her eyes upwards. There were no words. When such emotion overpowers us it is only the heart can speak.

It is no myth, no fanatic's vision of the imagination. Such prayers are answered; strength is given, protection felt.

When this lonely girl, so strangely hemmed in hitherto by a cruel power, rose from her knees, her beautiful face was shining with a glad hope, a sweet content. She had escaped! She was safe from her enemies. She went quietly to the couch, and fell into a sweet and placid slumber; from which the morning sunshine, stealing through curtained windows, only roused her.

That same sunshine, slanting full into Dave the hostler's eyes, finally aroused him and started him up, rubbing his eyes, staring stupidly around him. A heavy and persistent knocking from below startled him into keener consciousness.

"Sakes alive! It's almost noon. Shan't I catch it!" he exclaimed, making a hasty dive into his clothing. "However in the world did Sally come to let me lay abed here all the morning? It's a mean trick of her, that's what it is."

He scrambled down the rude stairs, thrusting his arms into his blouse as he went. The knocking still continued, and his faculties had come back enough for him to perceive it was at the front door.

At Sally's door he heard a long drawl, snoring breath. He stopped on the stairs, and listened.

"By Jove! Sally ain't up either. And how still it is downstairs. What's the matter with the folks there?"

His hair began to bristle with horror, and his eyes to protrude from their sockets. Whoever was knocking at the outer door came around to the window below.

"I say, Jim Donnelly, are you all murdered in your beds? It's eleven o'clock, and not a sound is heard around here."

"Oh Lor'! oh Lor'!" bellowed Dave. "I do believe that's it. We're all murdered in our beds that's certain."

He tumbled downstairs, and rushed to admit the clamorous neighbour outside. The pair of them, expecting to find a terrible sight, ventured desperately into the landlord's bed-room.

There were the worthy pair, sleeping as soundly as if it was twelve at night, instead of eleven o'clock in the forenoon.

"This is a queer go!" says the neighbour.

"What's got you all?"

"Old Nick for sure," says Dave, lugubriously, rubbing away at his eyes, "or master, never 'd let me lay a-bed till this time. Sally's asleep too."

The neighbour burst into a long laugh.

"Did you have poppies for supper, Dave?"

"Faith, and there's the travellers," says Dave with a new idea, "maybe they've robbed the house, and put us all to sleep."

At this juncture, the rosy host turned over, flung up his arms, and hearing voices, finally opened his eyes. It required ten minutes, at least, to make him comprehend matters. Then he sprang up with alacrity, fuming and swelling with wrath at something, or somebody, it was hardly clear which.

A general awakening followed, and a routing out of all the forces. The Quaker came down yawning. The two travellers, with heavy eyes and bewildered looks, appeared on the scene, just as Sally put in her head, half-covered with her apron, and whimpered:

"Oh, missis, I never did sich a thing afore in all my life. You've got the breakfast all out of the way, and never called me, and I lay asleep there and never knew nothing about it. I'm ashamed of myself, and don't know what's the matter."

The amused neighbour roared again, and held his sides against his explosive laughter.

"Bless you, Sally! I know no more than you do. I ain't had any breakfast. We've all been asleep. It is my opinion we're bewitched," gasped the landlady.

Sally's face cleared; and leaving the rest to settle the mystery, she made a hasty exit for the kitchen.

"I wanted you to call me early. I've overslept myself by more than two hours," said Colonel Falkin-stone, angrily, to the host as he appeared.

"It isn't my fault, sir. I should say, indeed, we were all bewitched. The whole house has slept till this time."

"There must be a charm in your beds, friend," said the Quaker, mildly. "It is long since I have enjoyed such sound slumber as under this roof to-night."

"Sound snoozy!" muttered Boniface, indignantly. "I'd like to find out what's at the bottom of it."

"Well, let us have breakfast, and be off as soon as we can," said the aristocratic colonel. "Come, my son, let us call Mabel. Knock at her door, and see if she also be under this mysterious, soporific spell."

The young man left them; was absent ten minutes or so, during which Abiatha Broad had suggested to Dave the good sense of looking after the hungry horses. He came downstairs, however, with furious leaps.

"Father, father! I knocked and knocked, then I took the key, unlocked the door, and went in—"

There was something in his face which made the dignified Colonel reel back.

"You don't mean—you can't mean—" he gasped.

"She's gone, sir. I've hunted the room all over, and she is gone. The window is wide open, beside."

"The window! But I looked, and it would have broken her neck to have jumped out."

"Then she has flown up, instead of jumping down. This is the meaning of all this queer performance. Mabel has gone, sir."

"I'll go, and look myself," said the other, in a voice hoarse with rage.

(To be continued.)

THE TORPEDO.—A specimen of the torpedo, or electric ray, was taken some days ago in a trawl-net in Galway Bay, in the west of Ireland. It seems entirely unknown on this coast, as the oldest fishermen, numbers of whom crowded round to stare at it when landed on the quay, declared they never saw anything like it before. I think they are equally scarce on other parts of the coast of Ireland; as, during a long experience of the fish of the Irish seas, I never saw or heard of one, nor did any of the trawler-men who have followed their occupation on the different trawling grounds round Ireland know what it was, nor had any of them seen a specimen before. I presented it to the museum of the Queen's College, in Galway, where I learnt its species, and where it is now preserved. The dimensions of this specimen were 31 inches in length, 14 in breadth, and it weighed 14 lbs. It differed from the ray or skate in the tail, which was broad, and tough as leather; and the sharp nose possessed by the other species of *Raidia* was entirely absent. Body and head, in fact, were in one nearly circular disc. In colour the back was a sort of inky-black with a rather rusty tinge; the belly was pure white.—**TRAWLER.**

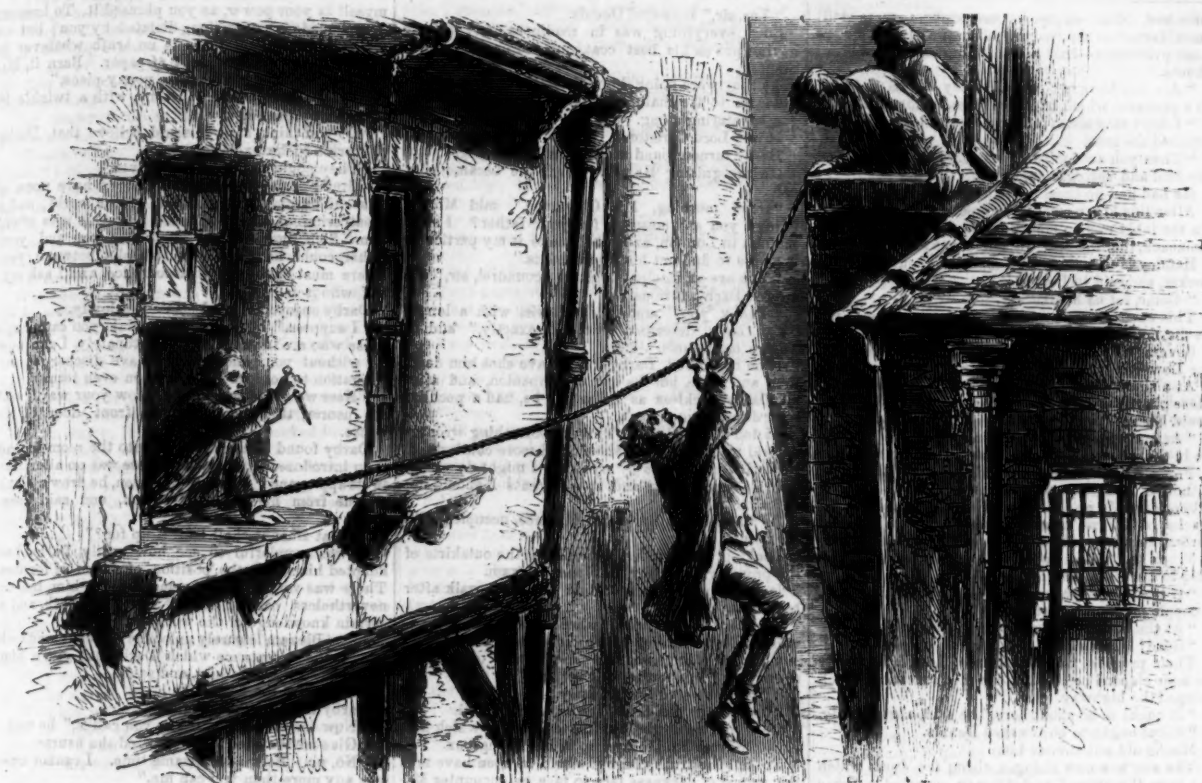
HORSES' DREAD OF TURTLES AND PORCUPINES IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Horses in the Cape Colony are said to have an instinctive dread of turtles, and can distinguish them at a considerable distance, either by their odour, if the wind is blowing in the direction, or by the sight of them. A traveller, accompanied by a Hottentot driver (almost all drivers in Cape Colony are Hottentots), upon one occasion found a turtle of tolerable size, and placed it in the cart with them; the wind was then blowing strongly in their faces, and although the driver cautioned him about frightening the horses, he would not believe that such a harmless kind of reptile as the turtle

could do so. However, they went along some distance, when in turning a corner, the wind now coming nearly behind them, presently the horse started and plunged forward, the driver being hardly able to hold him in. He had evidently got scent of the turtle. The Hottentot then begged the traveller to throw it out of the cart or they should have an accident, which he was obliged to do. These turtles are said to be freshwater and to have a strong odour. They frequently betake themselves to land, where they are sometimes found. Horses are also terribly afraid of porcupines in the night. Porcupines being nocturnal in their habits, when on their nightly rambles they suddenly hear the sound of an approaching horse, they try to run out of the way, and in running away have a habit of shaking their quills together, which makes a loud and singular rustling noise, at which horses are much alarmed. Porcupines are extremely common in many districts in South Africa. Numbers of their quills may be found along the roads almost everywhere.

THE COUNTESS OF DERWENTWATER

THE newspapers from time to time contain paragraphs concerning one Amelia Radcliffe (or Radclyffe), who styles herself Countess of Derwentwater, and endeavours to prove her rights by creating obstructions, and getting fined 10s. and costs. And the other day I read that "there were some enthusiastic demonstrations in favour of the 'countess,'" whose claims have of course been closely investigated by the romantic authors of the demonstration. They may, therefore, be able to state whether she depends at all upon her relationship to the late Mr. William Radcliffe (or Radclyffe), Rouge Croix, Pursuivant of Arms. If she do, it may be interesting to them to learn a little of his history. He died on the 22nd of June, 1828, after a "life devoted to genealogical inquiry." But in the meanwhile, so great had been his zeal for genealogical truth, that he had gone so far as to supply what he considered to be an omission in the parish register of Ravensfield. In consequence of this service performed for the cause of genealogy it is on record that he was treated with the grossest ingratitude, and was tried at the York assizes upon the indictment charging him with having, in the year 1801, forged in the parish register of Ravensfield, in that county, an entry purporting to be the marriage of Edward Radclyffe and Rosamunde Swyte, 24th of February, 1640; and with having set forth such false entry in a pedigree presented by him to the Herald's College, whereby he had pretended to show his own descent from the ancient family of Radclyffe, formerly Earls of Derwentwater, with a view to impose upon the college, as well as upon the governors of Greenwich Hospital, in whom the forfeited estates of that noble family were vested. The trial took place on (I think) the 17th of March, 1820; "the register was produced, and it appeared that the Rev. Thomas Radford (the curate of the parish at the time of the interpolation, and since deceased) had in February, 1802, attested the entry to be a forgery. The persons who had the custody of the register proved the time and place of the forgery, and Norroy, King of Arms and Register of the Herald's College, and York, Richmond, Somerset, and Windsor Heralds, and Portcullis Pursuivant were examined, and proved the handwriting to be that of the defendant." At the trial also "there were produced from Christ's Hospital a memorial and pedigree presented by the defendant in 1809, whereby he had succeeded in obtaining admission for his younger brother upon the foundation of that charity as being of kin to the founder, King Edward VI.; and in which the pedigree so forged was asserted, and the descent of the defendant drawn from it." After a quarter of an hour's deliberation the jury found the defendant guilty, and he was then sentenced to a fine of 50l. and imprisonment for three months in York Castle. I am so afraid that Amelia Radcliffe may depend to some extent upon that unfortunate entry in the parish register of Ravensfield, that I have ventured, for the sake of those lovers of romance who, perhaps, still believe that the Ryves dynasty ought to be sitting upon the throne of England, to prepare them for a possible shock. For myself, I have no more interest in the question than was aroused by accidentally discovering that Christ's Hospital had been imposed upon by a self-styled descendant of the Earls of Derwentwater. Y. S.

KING CHARLES XV. of Sweden has recently refused to sign a death warrant against a woman convicted by one of the tribunals of poisoning. His Majesty declared, at the same time, that for the future no capital execution should take place in his kingdom, and that if the death penalty were not abolished by law he desired it to cease in fact.



[CUTTING THE ROPE.]

HEART'S CONTENT. A Christmas Story.

By the Author of "Bondage of Brandon," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

DADDY CHIVERTON was well known all about the country, and when he sauntered up to the out-buildings of Low Wood Farm he saw a couple of men in the employ of Mr. Painter, the farmer, who spoke good-humouredly to him.

"Easy time now, Daddy," said one.

"How's that?" he asked.

"Your son's a gentleman, and you've no call to work."

"Oh! I like doing nothing," replied Daddy Chiverton.

"You've done it all your life nearly," said the man, "and you ought to be used to it now. I don't call poaching anything you know, Daddy."

"Never mind me. Let me alone," said the old man, nettled at these remarks, "what are you about?"

"Just going to get the shay ready to take Mr. Morris to Stanton," was the answer.

"Who's he?"

"A gentleman lodging with our governor."

"Do you drive him?"

"I shall time-day. There and back."

"What time do you return?"

"After dark, I suppose. But you're asking a lot of questions. What is it to you what time we come back?"

"Oh, nothing much. Good-day to you," said the old man, walking on.

"He's a character," said the farm-labourer, whose name was Dennis, to his companion.

"Ah! they're all a bad lot," was the reply.

"That's true as Gospel; though they have had a wonderful rise in the world," remarked Dennis.

Daddy Chiverton was satisfied with the intelligence he had gained. It was not necessary for him to identify personally Hamley Morris. He was well acquainted with Dennis, and as the latter was going to drive Mr. Morris to Stanton, in farmer Painter's chaise, he could not make a mistake, for the man who occupied the second seat in the trap would be the victim he wanted to kill.

This was how he reasoned.

Going back to his cottage, he loaded his gun, which was double-barrelled, and waited for night.

At half-past eight the moon would rise, and he

would be enabled distinctly to see objects passing along the road.

He was accounted an excellent shot, and was wont to boast that he never missed his aim.

When it grew dark, he took up a position by the side of the road, hiding himself, but reserving a gap, through which he could see and fire, when he had covered the object of his aim. Very slowly the time passed.

Daddy Chiverton saw the moon rise, and its rays silver everything that came within their influence.

When he was nearly worn out with watching and cold, for it was a clear, frosty night, and his cramped position was becoming painful, he heard the sound of wheels.

There was nothing much in that.

Several carts and carriages had passed him, but something told him that now his victim was approaching.

He trusted his murderous instinct, cocked his gun, and raised it to a position.

A chaise, drawn by one horse, came in sight.

It was driven by Dennis, and by his side was a tall man, with a bushy beard and whiskers.

Without his being aware of it, Daddy Chiverton's shadow was partly cast across the road.

When the chaise was near enough, Chiverton drew the trigger, but just at that moment the old mare which drew the gig shied at the shadow so providentially made manifest, and the chaise swerved on one side, so that the bullet grazed the tip of the horse's ear, and did no harm.

Daddy Chiverton uttered a curse, and fired a second time, but not under such favourable circumstances.

The gig was being carried along at a tremendous pace by the mare as the ball rattled after it, and it lodged in the woodwork behind, without doing any farther damage.

Thinking the last shot had done its work, Daddy Chiverton determined to take himself off to London by some train going up that night.

On his way to Stanton he passed a fish-pond, into which he cast his gun, and, gaining the railway station, he booked himself to the Metropolis.

When the train came up, he got into a third-class carriage, and was whirled swiftly along the iron road.

As may be imagined, the attack made upon the gig startled its inmates not a little.

Dennis, do what he could, was unable to pull the mare up, until, covered with foam, and with quivering flanks, she reached the homestead.

Dismounting from the chaise, Hamley Morris examined it and found the bullet-hole.

"A narrow escape for both of us, sir," said Dennis, joining him.

"For me, not for you. I expected something of this sort," answered Morris, quietly, "and I was prepared."

As he spoke he unbuttoned the front of his shirt, and showed Dennis a coat of mail, the chainwork being very finely made.

"I always wear this," he added, "when I expect danger, and even if the clumsy ruffian had hit me I should not have been killed."

"Then you don't suppose it was robbers, sir?" asked Dennis.

"Certainly not."

"May I make so bold as to ask who it was?"

"You may; but you won't get an answer, my good fellow," said Hamley Morris, with a smile.

"Am I to say anything about it, sir?" continued the man.

"It is not a secret. Say what you like."

After partaking of a cup of tea at the farm, Hamley Morris walked on to Heart's Content, and had an interview with Lady Carleton.

Mona saw him as he came away, and was putting on his coat in the hall.

"The old fool missed his aim," he said, as if talking to himself.

Mona started.

Hamley Morris looked at her, but she affected not to notice him, and went upstairs.

Her self-possession under trying circumstances was wonderful.

Morris went to rest early and rose at daybreak.

He found Dennis in the yard and said to him:

"You know the country round about pretty well, I suppose."

"I ought to do so, sir, considering I was born and bred here," answered Dennis.

"Very well. You can earn half-a-sovereign by taking me to one or two places. I will explain your absence to Mr. Painter, should he notice it."

"I'm your man, sir. Where to first?"

"I suppose you know an eccentric character named Daddy Chiverton?"

"Him as had the changed sou? Yes, I know him sir."

"I want to go to the cottage he occupied."

"Maybe he is at home; and, if so, he won't like visitors: he's never very sociable."

"He is not there. He has left this part of the country by this time—I'll answer for that," rejoined Hamley Morris, with a confident smile. "Lead on."

Dennis, going first, led the way to the wood, and by a short cut, to the cottage, which, as Morris had

surmised, was empty. Some embers were still smouldering on the hearth, and in the cupboard were some provisions—half a loaf, cold game, and a bit of cheese.

"Are you hungry?" said Hamley Morris, pointing to a pheasant which had been scarcely touched.

"I don't care about other people's leavings, sir," rejoined the man.

"Then you are foolish," answered Morris, taking the bird and eating it eagerly.

He had had no breakfast, and was hungry.

After this hasty meal he looked round the cottage. On the table was an empty brandy bottle and an old almanack, the first leaf of which was torn out.

Hamley Morris took this almanack, put it in his pocket, and said to Dennis:

"Come, let us be off."

This excited the curiosity of his companion, but he did not dare to ask any questions.

Several fir plantations stretched away down past the Low Wood Farm to the main road.

At a short distance from the house, skirting one of these plantations, the heavy step of Daddy Chiverton could be seen, firmly marked in the damp soil.

"As our friend Chiverton is not at home he may be in the wood. Let us see," said Hamley Morris.

For some distance they followed the footsteps, although Dennis was at a loss to divine why or wherefore. It was at times difficult to follow the tracks, but Morris seemed to have the eyes of a Red Indian for a trail, and did not once lose sight of it.

When he had gone about a league he stopped, and said to his companion:

"If we go straight on where shall we arrive after a couple more hours' walking?"

"At the main road," answered Dennis.

"Good! On again."

Their progress was necessarily slow, and nearly an hour elapsed before they reached a meadow which fringed the highway.

"It ought to be about here," he said, abstractedly.

"What ought to be?" asked Dennis.

Morris did not answer him.

The sun was now rising, melting the frost which lay upon the ground, and its rays revealed a large stone, under the hedge, upon which Daddy Chiverton had sat on the night preceding.

The mark of his feet in the soil were plainly to be distinguished; a few matches half burnt, and the ashes of a pipe, lay not far off.

Sitting down on this stone, Morris looked through a gap in the hedge, and was able to see the road.

Speaking to Dennis, he said:

"Stroll about, and look right and left."

"For what?" asked the man.

"A piece of paper with a hole in it."

Almost as he spoke he saw a piece of paper lying on the grass.

It was ragged at the edges, as if torn, and had a hole in the middle.

He rose to pick it up.

The hole was that made by a bullet, and the paper had, from its blackened appearance, served for wadding.

Dennis could resist no longer. His curiosity was devouring him, and he said:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but at the risk of offending you, I must ask you what it all means?"

"It means, my man, that the person who attempted to murder me sat last night on this stone, his pipe in his mouth, and his gun between his knees; when you and I passed, he fired," said Hamley Morris.

Taking the bit of paper, which had served as wadding, he unrolled it.

It was a printed paper, and in a corner were the words, "New and Improved Almanack," while farther down were the figures 13.

He drew from his pocket the old almanack which he had found on Daddy Chiverton's table.

The thirteenth page was missing.

"Look at that," he said, putting it into the hand of his attendant.

"The wicked old wretch!" said Dennis. "But why did he fire at you?"

"Because I know too much to be agreeable to certain parties," was Hamley Morris's enigmatical answer.

"You'll have him up for it, sir?"

"He will be in custody in less than a week from this time."

"Our superintendent at Stanton, Mr. Lee, is the man for you, sir," said Dennis, proud of a local celebrity.

Hamley Morris made a contemptuous gesture.

"Mr. Lee would not put his hand on his shoulder in twelve months," he said, with supreme disdain.

They walked back to the farm.

Hamley Morris went to his room, and soon appeared with a small carpet-bag.

"Put the horse to, Dennis, I want to go to the station," he said.

"Yes, sir," answered Dennis.

Soon everything was in readiness, and Dennis having put on his best coat, jumped up to drive to Stanton.

As they were going down the lane which led from the farm to the main road, they saw a man with a gun sauntering along.

It was Lord Carleton.

Darby turned round at the sound of the gig.

On recognising Hamley Morris he became very pale.

"Good morning, Mr. Chiverton," said Morris. "Have you any message for your father? I shall see him in London, as I shall make it my particular business to find out his whereabouts."

"You are an insolent, upstart scoundrel, sir," answered Darby, furiously.

"Thank you," answered Morris, with a laugh. "You have described yourself exactly," adding "drive on, Dennis."

If he had dared, Darby would have shot him dead, then and there, but he had a companion, and after all, Darby, reckless as he might be, had a peculiar regard for his own neck.

"I don't like all this. There is something wrong," he said to himself. "I should feel more comfortable if I had Mona always by my side. I might do worse. She is very clever, and at all events I should not fall alone."

He wandered on for some distance, occupied with his thoughts.

Looking up, he found himself on the outskirts of the property owned by Mr. Jonas Bloxam.

It was the usurer's custom to take a walk after breakfast.

He was thus occupied when he saw Darby advancing towards him, and he exclaimed, "Ah, how do you do. We have not had the pleasure of meeting since your elevation to the peerage."

"No," answered Darby, drily.

The perspiration broke out on his forehead.

He thought of the terrible document which Mr. Jonas Bloxam held locked up in his strong box.

To tell the truth, Darby would as soon have met the prince of darkness face to face, as encounter Mr. Jonas Bloxam, the usurer.

CHAPTER X.

THERE was an easy familiarity about Mr. Jonas Bloxam's manner which was anything but agreeable to Darby.

The usurer took his arm and walked about with him up and down the pleasant meadows, chatting about his elevation to the peerage, and the extraordinary luck which had attended his efforts to raise himself in the social scale, as Mr. Bloxam called the conspiracy which had dispossessed Ashley Leigh of his own.

Darby thought this would be a good opportunity to ask Mr. Bloxam for the dangerous and incriminatory document which he held in his custody.

He had long had a desire to do so, but he had put off the disagreeable task from day to day, he scarcely knew why.

"I am glad I have met you," he said. "For I wish to give you back your money, and get out of your debt."

"With all my heart," answered the usurer. "Come with me into my house. We can soon settle our business."

They turned their steps in the direction of the house, Darby saying that he liked to be on friendly terms with his neighbours.

"Yes," replied Mr. Bloxam. "It is always advisable to cultivate friendly relations with those in the same county with you; much that is agreeable or disagreeable depends upon it; but I am scarcely a fitting companion for your lordship."

There was a slightly sarcastic emphasis on the word which was not lost upon Darby.

"That is all nonsense. You are as good as I am," he said, with a laugh.

"You and I know that, but the people who look upon you as the veritable Lord Carleton—"

"So I am," said Darby, quickly.

"What about that little document which I have in my strong box?" asked the usurer, smiling blandly. "That confession in your own handwriting, which proves you to be an impostor. What about that, eh, my friend?"

"Surely, Mr. Bloxam," answered Darby, gravely, "you were not so foolish as to suppose that any reliance could be placed upon that?"

"Foolish—reliance—what do you mean?"

"I wanted money, and when a man is necessities he will commit any act of folly to fill his pockets."

"Oh, that is it?"

"Certainly. I did it to humour you. It was absolutely necessary that I should have the money. You had your whim; which was that I should place

myself in your power, as you phrased it. To humour you, I made a confession, dictated by you; but on my word of honour, there is no truth whatever in what I wrote on that sheet of paper. Burn it, Mr. Bloxam, for it is not worth a penny-piece."

Jonas Bloxam looked at Darby, with a twinkle in his cunning gray eye.

"Do you think a jury would believe that, Darby Chiverton?" he exclaimed.

"They could not help themselves."

"Stuff!" cried the usurer; "let us have none of this child's play. I am a man of the world, and a great criminal like you should have his wits about him. Sometimes I doubt whether you and your father could have got up this plot between you. There must have been an accomplice, and I ask myself who it is."

Darby enjoyed the old man's perplexity.

"I suppose," he said, "you think you can insult those who are in your debt. Fortunately, I can now do without you, and when I have discharged my obligation to you, we shall meet on even terms."

"Here we are, come in, you know your way," said the usurer, throwing open the front door of his house.

Darby found himself ushered into the room he had been introduced into before. There was no alteration in its appearance. Taking up a pen, he drew a blank cheque from his waistcoat-pocket, and said carelessly:

"What amount shall I fill it up for?"

It was wonderful to see how easily Darby had adapted himself to the position of a man of fortune. There was very little refinement about him, but he, nevertheless, carried himself with some dash, and a certain knowledge of the world.

Jonas Bloxam leisurely unlocked his desk, and took from it the acceptance which Darby had given him. Then placed it before him, and said:

"Sign these figures."

Darby filled up the cheque.

"Now for the confession, as you call it," he said.

"Give me the cheque," answered the usurer.

"No, no. Both at the same time. I cannot trust you any more than you can me."

Jonas Bloxam sat back in his chair, and very composedly said:

"That document, which will enable me to consign you to penal servitude, shall never go out of my possession. Please yourself about giving me the cheque; all I can tell you is, if it be not handed to me, I shall place the matter in the hands of the police, and you may take the consequences."

Darby quivered with rage; this was succeeded by a violent trembling; beads of perspiration stood on his forehead.

Jonas Bloxam regarded all these signs of trepidation with visible contempt.

What a terrible man the usurer was.

The country people had not exaggerated when they spoke of him as a man to be dreaded. One who would get the better of any half-dozen ordinary men.

"Those who sup with the devil should have a long spoon," says the proverb.

Between his knees was his gun, and Darby seizing it with the rapidity of lightning, presented it at Jonas Bloxam.

"Come!" he said, "I don't leave the house without that writing."

The usurer remained perfectly unmoved.

"It seems to me, my young friend," he answered, "that you will, under those circumstances, stay here a long while."

"How is that?"

"I invariably keep important papers at my banker's."

Darby lowered his gun.

"I insist upon examining your desk," he said.

"As you please."

Jonas Bloxam shrugged his shoulders, and pushed the desk over to him.

It was unlocked.

In vain Darby searched among its manifold contents for the precious document he so much wanted to get hold of.

It was not to be found.

"Are you satisfied now?" enquired the usurer.

Darby tore up the cheque he had written.

"No money," he said, "until that paper is forthcoming. I might as well be without the title and money, as live with a drawn sword over my head."

"I will give you a week," answered Jonas Bloxam. "If you are obstinate at the end of that time, and blind to your own interests, I will give Lady Carleton some news for which she will be grateful."

"And prove yourself an accessory after the fact," retorted Darby.

The usurer had not given him credit for knowing so much law.

He gnawed his nether lip.

"That is nothing," he said, with some decrease in his former confidence.

"Very well, we shall see," replied Darby, oracularly; adding, "not a halfpenny without that document; never mind whether it be true or false, or whether I attach importance to it or not, I'll have it. Good morning."

The nurse returned his salutation, and Darby, putting on his hat, left the house.

"Touch and go," ejaculated Jonas Bloxam, when alone, "I thought every minute he would have discovered the secret drawer. However, it is well, so far; though he is more difficult to work than I imagined. He will give way, I think, under a judicious system of terrorism. I must turn matters over in my mind. Who is his accomplice? That is what I should like to know."

While Jonas Bloxam was plunged in deep thought, Darby wended his way to Heart's Content, shooting carelessly as he went along, and not taking the trouble to pick up his game when he had killed any.

He began to be conscious that the clouds were gathering around him, and a storm was brewing which would burst over his devoted head, unless he managed his affairs so well as to prevent it.

On his way to Heart's Content he looked in at his father's cottage, and found it deserted.

The mysterious hint which had been thrown out, led him to believe that Daddy Chiverton had failed in his attempt to kill the stranger from London, as he called Morris.

Here was another enemy at large.

Darby felt the want of moral support more every hour.

Mona, with her strong will, great tact, real cleverness, and indomitable courage, would be a valuable helpmate indeed.

He resolved to stifle his love for Marian Ingledew, and make Mona his wife.

That important step would conciliate one who might be a most formidable enemy.

With her judicious counsel at his back he might be able to fight against Hamley Morris and Jonas Bloxam. At all events, her interest would be identical with his own, and they would stand or fall together.

His reception was cold in the extreme.

Lady Cariston and Marian were in the drawing-room when he was announced, and they promptly quitted the apartment as soon as he entered, without taking the slightest notice of him.

This coolness annoyed him, and he vowed inwardly that he would be revenged, by letting the house to Captain Scudamore for a shooting box, and turning them out, to go whithersoever they pleased.

He asked for Miss Seafield.

The domestic summoned her, and Mona, looking as queen-like as ever, walked into the room, and asked him what he wanted.

"My object in coming to Heart's Content is twofold," he said. "In the first place, Hamley Morris is alive, and has gone to London, to look for the old man, who, I suppose has missed his aim. The affair has been bungled somehow; and the old man has left his cottage."

"What then?" replied Mona, frigidly.

"As for the other matter it concerns you."

"Well!"

"If you are still of the same mind, there is my hand; and I will go to church with you, whenever you like," said Darby, bluntly.

"Let me see," said Mona, "to-day is Friday. On Monday, I will marry you privately at Stanton; that is to say, there shall be no parade, no public display; make your arrangements accordingly; and see about the license, and all that."

"On Monday. Shall I come here for you?"

"I will meet you in the church at half-past eleven."

"The parish church?"

"Yes."

Never perhaps was a marriage arranged in so cold and formal a manner between any two people.

When Darby looked at the magnificent creature before him; whose only fault was that she resembled a statue a little too much, he thought that she amply compensated for the loss of Marian.

Extending his hand to take leave, he said:

"We may as well seal the compact with a kiss!"

She repulsed him, almost roughly.

"You have no right to do that yet!" she said.

"I didn't mean any harm," he answered, as he shrunk back.

He was afraid of this woman.

"Stop a moment," said Mona, as he neared the door.

"Did you call me?" he asked.

"Yes. What is the amount of your income?"

"Twenty thousand a year, Snarley tells me."

"Who is Snarley?"

"The Stanton lawyer I have employed," answered Darby.

"Some fellow who will rob you through thick and thin, I suppose," she said, with a sneer.

"I don't know. He got my father and I off for poaching, very cleverly, more than once, when the case was dead against us."

"Never mind that. Tell him to draw up deeds of settlement, giving me half your income!" said Mona.

"Half!" ejaculated Darby, alarmed at the magnitude of the sum she asked for.

"What is there to surprise you in that?" she said, quickly; "am I to have no compensation?"

"For what?"

"For marrying you, to be sure."

Her tone was dreadfully satirical, and he winced under it.

"After all, I—"

"Don't argue the point. Go and do as I tell you; and when the deeds are signed, let Snarley bring them here for my inspection. I must be protected."

"Very well. It shall be done," said Darby, seeing there was no help for it. "Now may I ask one thing in my turn?" he added.

"If you like," she replied, in a tone of supreme indifference.

"Will you try to love me, Mona?"

"I cannot make rash promises."

"Is that all you have to say to me?" he queried, with a look of intense disappointment.

"All!"

This monosyllable was a death-blow to his hopes. He knew from that moment, that he should marry a woman, who having a heart to bestow, would not give it to him; never would he enjoy its devotion. Its homage, its love, would all these be laid at the feet of another?

Time would show.

When he went away, which he did immediately, he said to himself: "Wait till she is my wife. I will tame her proud spirit for her, or break her heart in the attempt."

The time between Friday and Monday elapsed very quickly. On Sunday, Mona, who had not been on very friendly terms with Marian, announced that she should leave Heart's Content on the following day.

This announcement took Marian Ingledew by surprise.

They had been companions for so long a time, that she did not like the tie between them, such as it was, to be so rudely severed.

"Is not your determination rather sudden?" she asked.

"It is rather so," was the unconcerned reply.

"May I ask where you intend to go?"

"By all means. I am going to be married!"

"To be married! and to whom?"

Marian Ingledew stared at her governess with the utmost surprise.

"To Lord Cariston."

"To that man! Oh, Mona, how can you, so proud, so refined, ever bring yourself to an alliance with such a person?" exclaimed Marian.

"That is my business," answered Mona, carelessly, as she walked to the window.

A proud sense of triumph swelled her bosom, as she reflected that she would soon gain the summit of her ambition.

She would, on Monday, become a peeress, and not only be the happy possessor of a coronet, but the mistress of vast wealth, such as she had dreamed of acquiring, when she fancied that there was a chance of Ashley Leigh making her his bride.

She was climbing up to the high position she coveted. It did not much matter who formed the ladder by which she attained the giddy eminence.

On the Monday she walked over to Stanton, and met Darby as appointed.

He had procured the license, and they were married. After the ceremony, they went to the castle, where a splendid breakfast was provided, and where Darby's new friends, the officers quartered at Stanton, and a few others, were assembled to meet her.

It was a mortification to her pride, however, to find that the only ladies who had been invited were the wives of Mr. Snarley, the lawyer, and one or two other men holding inferior positions in the town.

This was not the sort of society she desired, but she tolerated it for the time, and received the congratulations which were showered upon her with a calm dignity, which was habitual to her.

She was not dressed as a bride, having merely worn a black silk dress and a sealin jacket, a present from Marian Ingledew, in the days of their intimacy. During the progress of the breakfast Captain Scudamore paid Mona marked attention.

He was very gentlemanly, in addition to being very handsome, and Mona showed herself flattered by his preference.

"Your regiment is expected to move soon, I believe," she said.

"Yes, Lady Cariston,"—how delightful was the sound of the title to this unprincipled and ambitious woman—"You have been correctly informed, but I am hopeful that I shall be a neighbour of yours, nevertheless."

"Indeed," she said.

"Yes. Your husband has kindly promised to allow me to rent his place called Heart's Content, which will make a capital hunting and shooting-box. I shall sell my commission, for I am wretchedly tired of the army."

"Would you like to live at Heart's Content?" asked Mona.

"Very much."

"Consider that affair settled, then," she replied. "I will take care that it is yours within a week."

"Many thanks," said Captain Scudamore, adding: "Do not think I flatter you, when I say that it has acquired an additional charm in my estimation, since it will enable me to be so near yourself."

Darby was treated by his wife as a cypher.

He saw her flirting with Captain Scudamore, and he did not like it, but to have remonstrated with her just then, would, he knew, have been to make himself ridiculous, and have done as much good as trying to stem the advance of the tide with an empty barrel. A painful suspicion crossed his mind that his troubles were only just beginning.

He was soon to find that his suspicions were founded upon a substantial basis.

An overwhelming tide of trouble was beating up against him.

He had built his house on the sands: would it withstand the storm, when its foundations were shaken to their very base by the wind and the rain, and the furious floods which threatened it?

That was the question.

CHAPTER XI.

HAMLEY MORRIS arrived in London.

His business, it may be plainly stated, was to effect the capture of Daddy Chiverton; threaten him with a prosecution for the attempt to murder; and wring the full particulars of this plot from him.

That Daddy Chiverton was in the secret of the plot which had raised Darby to the peerage there could be no doubt.

It will, perhaps, have been conjectured that Hamley Morris was a detective, employed by Lady Cariston to solve the mystery of Darby's sudden appearance as the heir to the Hartshill estates.

The conjecture will have been well founded, for such was the case; and the metropolitan police force boasted no more intelligent officer than Morris.

Many apparently inexplicable affairs had been solved through his agency; and he did not despair of throwing light upon the singular one which now engaged his attention.

His first care was to arrest Daddy Chiverton.

To find a man in London may seem a difficult undertaking; but it was less difficult to Hamley Morris than it would have been to one less versed in a peculiar sort of knowledge of human nature.

He considered where such a man as Daddy Chiverton would be most likely to go to on his arrival in London.

That he had gone to the capital, the detective discovered by making enquiries at the railway stations.

For some days Hamley Morris frequented places of amusement at the east end. He was acquainted with the person and features of the man he was in search of, and fancied that he would be more inclined to plunge into dissipation at the east than at the west end of the town.

One night, on visiting a theatre in the centre of a densely-populated neighbourhood, he saw Daddy Chiverton in the pit with two friends, whom he recognised as notorious evil-doers; they were chatting together, and seemed pleased with the entertainment, which an enterprising manager had provided for them. While Hamley Morris was deliberating as to whether he should arrest Chiverton in the theatre, the three men rose and passed out. He followed them.

They lingered at the entrance for a moment, and he gathered from their conversation that something had alarmed them, and that they deemed it prudent to go.

To attack the three men would be to encounter desperate odds; and Hamley Morris proposed following them to their dwellings, because when they were safely housed, he could take what measures he pleased to effect the capture of the old man.

It was Morris's opinion that Daddy Chiverton did not know into what dangerous company he had fallen; and that the object of the thieves was to rid him of his money, as soon as they had sufficiently insinuated themselves into his confidence.

They threaded Whitechapel; passed through Wapping; and after paying more than one casual visit to a public-house, came to a small, low-looking tavern.

This was peculiarly situated.

At the end of the street flowed the river, and the house was built so as to place its back upon a little creek which ran out of the river.

There were houses on each side of the creek, the back windows of all of them opening into the narrow channel, which was not more than thirty feet across.

Some distance higher up, the waste of a large factory was discharged into the creek, which probably accounted for its preservation.

At low tide there was not much water in the creek, but when the tide was up, the river came almost to a level with the windows of the tap-room.

It was to this house that Daddy Chiverton and his friends went.

Hamley Morris entered the bar and called for some spirits and water, which was supplied to him.

The men went upstairs, and he heard their voices in a room above the bar, into which he did not dare to pursue them at present, for fear of exciting their suspicions and encountering a formidable resistance.

A few ruffians, who were choice specimens of their class, were standing round the bar drinking, swearing at everything in general, and the police in particular.

It would have gone hard with Hamley Morris if they had entertained any suspicion of his real vocation.

He was perfectly well aware of this.

After drinking his grog he left the house with the intention of looking for assistance.

With Daddy Chiverton's two friends he could do nothing, although he knew them to be convicted thieves; and this is the great difficulty the police have to contend with. They must not lay their hands on bad characters, although they know them to be such, unless they can catch them in the commission of some illegal act.

It was a fine moonlight night. The streets were dry, and by the aid of the moonlight, together with that cast by his lantern, Morris saw a constable who had just come on duty; the time being about a quarter to eleven.

Beckoning to the constable, Hamley Morris waited for him to approach.

"You are on duty for the night?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"I am in the detective department, Scotland Yard, and I am also a sergeant of the A Reserve," continued Morris. "My name is Nugent"—this was his professional appellation—"it may be known to you. However that may be, I stand in need of your assistance."

"You shall have it, Mr. Nugent," answered the policeman, who became civil and interested at once.

"If this affair be well managed I shall not forget you," Hamley Morris went on; "I will see what can be done for you in the way of promotion. But we have difficult work before us. Do you know a small tavern on the left hand side?"

"The 'Creek House'?"

"That is it. What sort of character does it bear?"

"The worst in the neighbourhood. It gives us more trouble than a dozen others, and is always full of bad characters. Only the other day one of our men was knocked about there shamefully."

"Are you armed?"

"I have my truncheon. That is all they allow us here."

"And I have a revolver. We shall be a match for them, I think. Now attend to me. There is an old countryman upstairs, in the company of two well-known thieves. I have known them at the west-end. The old man I must have, for a capital offence; the others may go where they like. What I am afraid of is, an attempt at rescue by those below."

"Will you watch while I go to the station for assistance, Mr. Nugent?" said the constable.

"I think I won't risk that; our birds might give us the slip," answered Hamley Morris. "No, we will make the attempt now, and I shall rely upon your hearty co-operation. You will wait outside until you hear me fire my revolver; which I shall do as a signal that I require your assistance."

The constable nodded.

"My name's Sampson, sir," he said, "if you should think of me when it's all over."

"A good name, too," said Hamley Morris, surveying with admiration the stalwart fellow before him, who was over six feet in height, and stout and strong in proportion.

(To be continued.)

ROSSINI.—A correspondent gives us Rossini's own account of his withdrawal from public life:—"Some

fourteen or fifteen years ago I went to see Rossini at his house in Florence, where he was then residing. In the course of conversation he inquired what there was new in Paris, whence I had lately come, and I mentioned a piece by Scribe (the *Bataille des Dames*, I think it was) as the latest novelty. 'Now,' said Rossini, 'there is a thing I cannot understand. Why on earth should Scribe go on at his age writing for the stage? What has he to gain? Money he does not want; any increase of fame he can hardly expect, and if he got it, what difference could it make to him? His position in life is fixed. But with some people it seems to be a rage. They cannot leave off writing. For my own part I have already steadily resisted the entreaties with which for more than twenty years I have been assailed to tempt the stage once more. I know very well that I can do nothing better, if as good as I have done already. When I had written the *Barbiers*, the *Gazza*, *Semiramide*, and *Guillaume Tell*, to say nothing of a crowd of other operas, I felt that my best powers had been exerted. After reaching his prime a man does not grow taller or stronger. He may grow fatter—mais pour ma part je ne me soucie pas que ma musique prenne du ventre.'

WIDOWS' WEEDS.

"MY DEAR FRIEND:—I shall be very glad to accept your kind invitation to pass the summer with you, on your granting me one condition. You know something of my sad history; how at the age of nineteen, after six short months of bliss, my idolised husband was ruthlessly torn from me by the destroyer—death. During nearly three years I have lived a secluded life, that has been sacred to the memory of my sainted James. I feel that I am yet wedded to him in everything—must be through life; and that I must not be brought into contact with gay, frivolous company. It would be sacrilege to his memory, and I have no desire but to be left alone with my life-weight of sorrow, and remain as far removed from the thoughtless world as possible. If I can find such seclusion in your home, and if, during the period of my stay, you will accede to what may seem to you my selfish demands, and forbid your young and happy friends to visit you, or, at least, to see me, I will gladly seek your home as a place of rest, and your heart as a twin sister in sympathy and consolation with this blighting grief of a life, and we will mourn together.—Your true friend, "MABEL ATHERTON."

Now the lively little gray-haired woman, who was the recipient of the above missive, puzzled over it a long time to know what to think of the writer; and at last her conclusion on this point was made very evident by the hearty, good-natured laugh that she indulged in.

Don't be shocked, my sensitive readers, into supposing that this little woman—who had years enough to know better—was laughing through sheer heartlessness at the imagined grief of the young Mrs. Mabel Atherton, which found expression in her letter, with its deep fringe of mourning.

Aye, that was it—"imagined grief," for the lively little gray-haired woman of fifty—Mrs. Jane Fleming—had seen enough of the world in all its phases, and had within her own life enough of its experiences to know that the griefs of a girl (the old lady's words, my dear friends), of twenty-one or two, when of more than three or four months', or, well, say at the utmost, a year's duration, are but the perverted foibles of a silly brain, or monomania of a disordered intellect.

Remember, this wise little woman had reference only to those griefs which seek outward manifestation and outward sympathy. To be sure, there are griefs which lay their tender touch over all the elements of the heart and head, breathing a gentler hush over the spirit, and tinging with a golden glow of quiet, peaceful submission every lineament of life; these are too holy for utterance—too pure for contact with the outer world—too gentle and sincere to find sympathy in aught but the quiet whispering of their own memory, and too full of heaven's mercies to pervert a life from its heaven-endowed purposes of good, and make it an insanity.

She had such a grief, hidden from the world's view, and it was never perceived in her face by those who were curious about it. After a happy union of five years, her husband, whom she had loved with all the devotion of a true and faithful heart, was taken from her. That was twenty years ago, and she, too, might have sat herself down in idleness, and frittered her years away in selfish repining, but for the needs that forced her to forget her griefs in severe struggles with the world; but even now when she sat in the twilight, with a peaceful calm in her face, her eyes were looking through the shadows, and her thoughts were wandering down cobwebbed

and dust-begrimed vistas, to that golden period of her existence, when he wandered with her.

She had never married since. She believed, too, in her good, generous heart, that Mabel Atherton had such a quiet sense of loss in her heart as she had described above, and it was not at it she was laughing; but at the false grief, the imagined duty to mourn loudly, and to wear her sorrow on "her sleeves for daws to peck at."

At any rate, the young widow received the desired assurance of seclusion, and duly found herself, on her arrival at Mrs. Fleming's, clasped in the lady's arms, and greeted with a warm kiss, which made her reciprocate these friendly advances with more animation than she had expressed in any act for a long time previous.

These two had never met before, but the Widow Fleming had been the dearest friend of Mabel Atherton's mother. This bond at once made them fast friends, and Mabel was made to feel that she was sincerely welcome at this country home.

During the first days of her stay with Mrs. Fleming, the sweet, sad-faced little form, wrapped in sable habiliments of mourning, with not a vestige of white to relieve it, gave herself over a prey to her chronic melancholy, and sat during the long days and evenings in a lethargy of hopelessness, looking with expressionless eyes and face into the future, or, if speaking, sending a grave-like chill with every word, and wandering off as soon as possible into panegyrics over the dead, or taking joyless views of the future, with much the same zest that one indulges in a good dinner with indigestion lurking behind it.

You have seen such people, my friends, and no doubt have thought, as I do, that it is the most extreme selfishness to humanity and thanklessness to heaven thus to wrap one's self in the shroud of one's own griefs, and expect all the world to abandon their duties and mourn also.

Mabel Atherton did not realise this; but somehow, Mrs. Fleming had a way of dropping in at the moment when she felt most despairing, and exorcising these sable spirits, by drawing her thoughts away into pleasanter channels, and making her forget self, in the cares, hopes, and joys of others. Indeed, several times she was shocked, almost horrified, at finding a merry peal of laughter, as in olden days, well up to her lips and escape from them ere she could control it; after which occurrence she would do penance by relapsing into a deeper shade of sadness, and talking more frequently of her mourned idol. Yet, withal, her face was not so often gloomy, and her heart was lighter; while the world did not seem so bad a world as before she came to this lively little old lady, whose thoughts always wandered into pleasant places.

"Mabel," Mrs. Fleming said to the young widow, one day, "you must find the constant company of an old woman like me very tiresome. A number of my young friends are anxious to manifest their sympathy for you, and to lend some little enjoyment to your stay among us; and I have almost decided to have a quiet social gathering of them here, some afternoon."

"Oh, auntie!" (for she had learned to call the old lady thus) "the bare mention of such a purpose is perfectly shocking, and for me to consent to it would be sacrilege to the dear memory of my lost treasure."

"But you must have some enjoyment, love."

"Enjoyment! the word is dreadful to my ear. There is no enjoyment for me in this world, for my life is buried in the grave with my sainted James, and I beg the world to forget me, as all in it but me have forgotten him. I want no consolation but his memory, and I shall find no happiness until I am laid by his side."

"So you think, now."

"So I think! Oh, auntie, do you not know that I shall think so all my life?"

"Yes, as girls' lives go, which are spans of several months, when they commence a new existence, with other feelings and purposes."

"Your insinuation is awful, aunt," replied Mabel; "but my own life proves its incorrectness. I have not changed during these three years."

"The more need that you should change at once," drily responded the old lady.

"Your words terrify me. I can never forget my lost one."

"Neither should you. But while we grieve tenderly over the departed, we should remember that our lives are not urns in which their ashes should be deposited. We have our duties in life as well as they had, and their removal does not absolve us from them, but rather raises up new obligations to their fulfilment. No one can live within himself or herself and do their duty to mankind and to heaven. Neither is it best that we should ever force upon all who come in contact with us the sense of our bereavement by word, look, or dress. Bethink you,

how long we would submit to one who, having a fearful wound, should tear it open to all, that they might see it in its hideousness always."

"But no one was ever called upon to part with such a treasure as mine—"

She did not perceive the pained, reproachful look that came to her from the old lady's eyes, and she continued:

"And I will wear deepest mourning for him all my life, to prove that there is one who can cling to one object through life and never seek another."

The subject was dropped, and the young people were not invited to come to "Aunt Fleming's."

The young widow had found a quiet, sober retreat down by a wooded stream, and here she wandered every day, and in the solitude indulged in her pet melancholy.

One day Mrs. Fleming was surprised and alarmed to see her return from one of these visits to her retreat, leaning heavily on the arm of a young man. It was evident that something had befallen her, for she was very pale and almost speechless, and the old lady hastened to relieve the young man of his burden and lead her to the couch.

The young man was already known to Mrs. Fleming as Ernest McClelland, the physician, and in reply to her look of inquiry he explained the cause of Mabel's helplessness. It seemed that while passing along the road he had been attracted by her screams, and going to her assistance, had found that her alarm was occasioned by a harmless snake, which had made its appearance from some dead leaves near which she was seated. After dispatching the snake he saw that she was rendered so powerless by her alarm that she needed his assistance to reach the house.

Mabel had, by the time this recital was made, recovered from her fright sufficiently to make an effort to convince Mrs. Fleming that Dr. McClelland had not done himself justice for all the bravery he had displayed in saving her from what she believed must otherwise have terminated in a dreadful death. Her expressions of gratitude to him were warm and sincere, and when he ventured to beg the privilege of calling the following day, to learn if she had entirely recovered from the unpleasant alarm, the request was readily granted by Mabel, and acquiesced in by Mrs. Fleming, with a smile which might have meant nothing—or a great deal.

During the remainder of the day and evening the memory of the dead was tabooed, and Mabel favoured the patient old lady with repeated thrilling accounts of the young doctor's terrific combat with the harmless snake.

"She felt that he was the saviour of her life."

"And," the old lady remarked, "deserved her warmest thanks."

"Yes, her eternal gratitude."

"She knew him," the old lady said, "to be a good young man."

"A noble man," Mabel thought.

"Worthy to be received as a friend," Mrs. Fleming continued.

"He was a genuine hero," Mabel was convinced.

"A highly respected gentleman," the old lady knew.

"So self-possessed, so brave, so regardless of personal risk!"

"A pleasant talker."

"Handsome, dignified, noble in his bearing."

"And an agreeable companion."

"With such expressive eyes, and grand, intellectual face, and delightful waving hair, and musical voice, and deferential air—"

Mabel was stopped in the full flow of her enthusiasm for want of breath to continue.

"He was considered the best catch in the neighbourhood," the old lady assured her.

Here the young widow was silent.

"And," pursued the old lady, "though the snake was perfectly harmless, and any eight-year old boy would have done as much as this doctor who was suddenly metamorphosed into a hero of wonderful proportions, it was due to him that he should be received as a friend."

Mabel bridled up at this insinuation against the great darling of her new-found hero. She could not be convinced that this particular snake was aught else than the most venomous of reptiles, that would have literally devoured her but for the opportune appearance of the physician. The two women were so greatly at variance with each other on this point, that Mabel was permitted to retire, unshaken in her belief.

The young doctor duly made his appearance the following morning, and every day thereafter. In the time consumed during these visits Mabel had little leisure to think of the sainted dead; and the notable change in her appearance, the ripened colour in her cheeks, the happy light in her eyes, and the smiles wreathing her lips, might, I suppose, be also attributed to the young doctor's visits.

"Mabel, darling," said the old lady, one day,

"where are you wandering to now?"

"For a ramble over the pastures after wild flowers."

"But are you not afraid of the snake?"

"Dr. McClelland will accompany me, you know, and I am never afraid when he is with me. Then the day is so full of enjoyment, and I am so brimming over with life that I cannot remain in."

"Is that right, Mabel," said the old lady, with a very sanctimonious face. "Have you forgotten that there is no enjoyment for you in this world, and that your life is buried in the grave of your lost treasure?"

"Now, auntie, your insinuation is very cruel," murmured the widow, in a hurt tone, and with tears in her eyes. "I have never ceased to mourn for my great bereavement. Dr. McClelland is different from any one else, and I am sure that poor James, if he were alive, would extend to him his warmest friendship for his kind attentions to me."

"Then he would be very generous. The young man's visits are very frequent."

"That is because our residence is on his way home from visiting his patients in the neighbourhood."

"Ah, disease must have become very prevalent without my knowledge. I remember that before that snake adventure of yours his professional duties did not call him this way more than once in two or three weeks."

"It is very compassionate in him to call so frequently to learn if we are all well, when his time must be so precious—"

"That he can devote the half of every day to our humble selves," drily put in the old lady.

"Now, auntie, I am sure I should have been very ill after that terrible fright, but for his care and kindness."

"I agree, darling, that his course of treatment has been very beneficial to you."

"And, auntie, he is generous, to sacrifice his own comfort by coming over every day to accompany me in my walks. Just think, I should not dare to go out of the house for fear of those dreadful snakes if it were not for his thoughtfulness."

"No doubt he is very disinterested."

"And I shall never be able to repay him."

"Why, can he be looking for reward?"

"Oh, no, auntie; he is too unselfish for that."

"Of course."

And Mabel went away satisfied that the dear old auntie did realise how good, noble, and disinterested the young doctor was, though, for the moment, she imagined there was a slight tinge of sarcasm in that last utterance of hers. She had been afraid that the old lady might think she was too much in company with the young man, and that she was forgetting the one whom she mourned for—indeed, unwelcome thoughts to the effect that she really was forgetting him, sometimes intruded themselves, but not so often now as formerly. She was silencing them, for she knew that Ernest McClelland would never, never presume to be more to her than her dearest living friend, and that her good, buried James was more precious to her than ever before.

And thus having satisfied the old lady and quieted her own conscience, she thought it was only right to make amends for her miserable doubts about the doctor by leaning more heavily on his arm, and looking up more confidently into his eyes, that shone down on her with such a warm light. It was natural that he should pass his arm around her to help her over the marshy places, and as natural that he should retain it there, only with a closer pressure, lest she might take cold if it were removed, I suppose. Strange to say, the buried James, was so satisfied with this bold proceeding on the part of the daring doctor, that he did not arise from the grave to forbid it; and, of course, after this proof of her dead idol's acquiescence, Mabel could not find heart to object.

The following morning, Mabel manifested a good deal of trepidation about something, the nature of which Mrs. Fleming could not divine for a moment.

"Auntie!"

"I am listening, darling."

"Do you think there would be any harm in my wearing white cuffs and collar?"

"None in the least, my child; nor if you went farther and discarded mourning altogether."

"Gracious! auntie, you shock me fearfully."

"As I did a number of weeks ago when I proposed that you should put on a white collar. But, Mabel, I am dying with curiosity to know what good influence has been at work to occasion this query of yours."

"I—I look so fearfully horrid in deep mourning, with nothing to relieve it."

"And it has taken you three years to find that out?"

"And—and Ernest thinks I ought not to wear mourning all the time."

"Ernest!" repeated the old lady.

"Mr. McClelland, I mean. He thinks I'd look ever so much better if I wouldn't dress so soberly."

"Then Ernest is a sensible fellow; but why should he presume to criticise a lady's dress, I'd like to know?"

"Now, aunt, it was kind of him to do it, for I should never have discovered how horrid I do look in black if he had not said anything. And what he said isn't like what anyone else would say. He is my—my brother, you know, and I am glad he does tell me things that I ought to know."

"Your brother, eh? I am glad to hear it, for he is a good fellow."

"The best, warmest-hearted, dearest of men, indeed he is, auntie."

"And, of course, he has told you all about his approaching marriage."

"His—his what, auntie?"

"His marriage, darling. Has he not told you that he is going to be married to a lady in this neighbourhood?"

"N—no!"

"Well, that is strange. He mentioned it to me some days ago."

"I don't understand—you are not serious, auntie?"

"I assure you that I am, dearest; but there is nothing startling in this intelligence. Of course such an agreeable young man could not always remain single."

"But he ought to have told me," and the young widow's voice was quite hysterical.

"I suppose it was his intention to give you a pleasant surprise by introducing you, without previous notice, to his intended bride. Why, what is the matter, darling—you are not well?"

"N—no, not very, but it will pass in a few moments. I will lie down on the couch and you need not call me for dinner."

An hour after, when the young doctor, with his usual self-assurance, walked into the room, he saw the little sable-clad figure on the couch, with head and hands buried in the pillow.

"Mabel, what ails you, are you ill?" he inquired, in anxious tones, as he bent over her, for she always received him with glad face and open hands extended towards him.

"Please don't trouble yourself about me, Mr. McClelland," came in smothered tones from the pillow.

"Mr. McClelland!" repeated the young man, in reproachful tones. "Mabel, there must be something wrong when you address me so," and he endeavoured to draw her hands away from her face.

"Your hands are wet, and your face, too. Will you tell me what your grief is?"

She struggled to free herself from his arms, for he had raised her head from the pillow and was looking into her tear-stained face.

"I—I hope you will be happy—"

She did not get any farther because of the sobs that came.

"I do not understand you," he replied, gravely.

"Why, are you not going to be married?" she exclaimed, as she looked up into his face with a faint hopefulness. He read the cause of all her trouble then.

"Yes, darling, I am going to be married—if you will accept me and name the happy day. I confided my hopes to Mrs. Fleming some days ago, and it was to reveal to you my love and ask you to be my own wee wife that I came over to-day. You will not refuse me—say you will not refuse me?"

"Oh, Ernest, I thought I had lost you!" she whispered, in broken tones, but with blushing, happy face, and she nestled closer within his arms, while he ventured to exact the seal of their betrothal from her lips.

And thus it was when Mrs. Fleming found them and gave them her sanction. Her only audible comment was that, if Mabel did say it, he was the best, warmest-hearted, dearest of men, and she, since she had resolved to dispense with mourning, was the sweetest of women.

C. B.

At a meeting of the St. Pancras board of guardians, a few days ago, it was stated that in a ton of sugar, which had been supplied by the contractor, fifty pounds of sand and an equal quantity of chalk and fibres of wood had been discovered.

HENCEFORWARD letters addressed to soldiers belonging to regiments which may be stationed at Mauritius, and forwarded by private ship, will not be subject to the ship gratuity of one penny, in addition to the usual postage of one penny, but will be chargeable with the postage of one penny only.

MANY years ago a gentleman in conversation with the first Marquis of Hastings, mentioned having met with a relation of his Lordship's who bore his name.

Upon this the marquis observed, that although there were many of the name descended from the original stock, yet there were none who could exactly be termed relations. "for, said he, 'the title has descended from father to only son since the days of Charles L.' Frail as this tenure was, it held good until the second Marquis died, leaving two sons, both of whom died young, and the title has just become extinct."

A BALL-ROOM BRAVO.

It is alleged that at a ball held in Quebec, Captain Elmhirst, of the 53d Regiment, repeatedly, whilst dancing, hustled a city gentleman named Mesurier, and a lady, and at last knocked them against the grate. Mesurier took it good-humouredly until he heard that the captain had been boasting of his exploits, saying that he intended "to teach the young Canadian manners." As the party was breaking up, he demanded an explanation from the captain, who first denied and then admitted the fact, and finally, when Le Mesurier angrily said that he would have satisfaction for such behaviour, the gallant captain grew humorous, and said, "Oh! I shall be delighted to see you to-morrow; it will give me extreme pleasure. Oh, dear! what a d-d funny fellow you are; you quite frighten me."

On the next morning Le Mesurier took a cane in his hand, and called upon the captain, who was asked to apologise. His first answer was that he did not know what his visitor meant—a statement which might briefly be described by a very small word, were the word in common journalistic use. Then he postponed the apology, and asked Le Mesurier to call at his club in an hour; finally he made up his mind to say, "No, I won't; most decidedly not." Whereupon Le Mesurier committed the imprudence of breaking his cane upon the captain's person, and a hand-to-hand fight ensued, which was evidently becoming serious for the captain, for he got out of it by calling upon the guard to arrest his antagonist. In the evening two of the officers of the 53rd called on the Judge of the Sessions and on the Recorder, and tried to get a warrant for the imprisonment of this incorrigible man, who would not be thrown into a grate, even by one of the 53rd; but finding that the law would not help them, they sat down and penned the two following letters, which are, in their way, remarkable curiosities:—

"Citadel Barracks, 22nd October, 1868.—Sir,—By your cowardly action of striking Captain Elmhirst, while in uniform, you have grossly insulted the 53rd Regiment, at the same time putting it out of his power to act, without the cognizance of the military authorities. As I consider a personal insult has been offered to myself alone, I intend expressing freely and publicly my opinion on the subject. I would add that I am not averse to taking a trip across the border, at your convenience. You will please excuse any ambiguity in this letter, as the rules of the service prevent an officer of her Majesty's army sending a challenge. I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant. (Signed) —, Captain 53rd Regiment."

"Citadel Barracks, Quebec, 22nd October, 1868.—Sir,—I consider that by the cowardly manner in which you struck Captain Elmhirst, while in full uniform, it was your intention to insult the whole of the officers of the 53rd Regiment. I, therefore, as senior captain in the regiment, demand a full written apology, disclaiming all intention of so doing, to be inserted in the papers, or I shall otherwise take it as your wish to insult me personally, and shall resort to the means employed by gentlemen to resent such insult. I remain, yours to command, (Signed) —, Captain 53rd Regiment."

Close upon the despatch of these letters came a certain Major Garnier, who was commissioned by Captain Elmhirst to arrange for a hostile meeting between the aggrieved parties. Mr. Le Mesurier declined to accept the challenge, on the ground that his enemy had first sought to imprison him, and had subsequently had recourse to legal proceedings. Anxious, however, to remove the impression that he had insulted the whole regiment in striking Captain Elmhirst (a notion which is incomprehensible), Le Mesurier wrote an explanatory letter to the colonel of the regiment, denying that he had any such intention, but insisting that this communication should not be taken as a reply to any letters he might have received from the officers of the 53rd. Whereupon Mr. Le Mesurier received a letter from each of the two captains, accepting his apology. Mr. Le Mesurier has again written to the colonel of the regiment to say that as he never, even in imagination, insulted a whole regiment, it was impossible for him to apologise, and that his letter was merely an explanation.

ADVERTISING pages are a fertile source of funny announcements. One of the latest is as follows:—

"A good scene painter, who keeps sober during business hours," is advertised for. What the painter does after or before business hours is, as Mr. Toots would say, "of no consequence." Here is another advertisement from the same columns—"A trained horse wanted. Small, light, and handsome. Accustomed to stage, races, fire, &c., and not already well known to the public."

THE BIRTH OF WORDS.

It is always extremely interesting to know at what precise period certain words first made their appearance in English literature. The well-known epistolarian, James Howell, in his "Lexicon Tetraglotton, or, English-French-Italian-Spanish Dictionary," which was published in 1680, has the following paragraph at the end of the preface:—

"Let the Judicious Reader observe besides, that in this new Lexicon and Nomenclature there be very many recent words in all the lower languages which were never inserted in Dictionary before. It is now above forty years since Florio, Cotgrave and Minshew compiled theirs, but there be divers words got into those languages since; Touching the English, what a number of new words have got into her of late years which will be found here; as *stumping* of wine, *clover grass*, *regalos*, *treatment*, *mobby*, *punch*, *perino* (Caribbean Islands drink), *picaro*, *peccadillio*, *pantaloon*, *vogue*, *Quakers*, *Seekers*, *Levellers*, *Trepanners*, *piquering*, *plundering*, *storming*, *Excise*, &c., and others which got in during the reign of the Long Parliament."

How much dependence can be placed upon this statement? Pantaloons we know Shakespeare used twice ("As You Like It," act ii. sc. 3, l. 158; and "Taming of the Shrew," act iii. sc. 1, l. 37). It is worth noting that Shakespeare makes the word *entertainment* serve where we should now use *treatment*. In the "Tempest," for instance (act i. sc. 2. l. 465), when Prospero threatens to bind Ferdinand "neck and feet together," the young prince declares he will "resist such *entertainment*;" and again, in "Taming of the Shrew" (act iii. sc. 1, l. 2):

Luc. Fiddler, forbear; you grow too forward, sir: Have you no need for the *entertainment*? Her sister Katharine welcomed you withal?

viz., when (act ii. sc. 1, l. 154)

With that word, she struck me on the head,

And through the instrument my pate made way.

If Mrs. Clarke's Concordance is to be depended on, not one of the other words occurs in Shakespeare's Plays.

INGENUITY OF BELGIAN THIEVES.

We all know (some, perhaps, by sad experience) what artifices are put in practice in all large cities by thieves to get possession of goods coveted by them; in many cases exercising ingenuity worthy of a better cause. The last new dodge out was practised at Bruges, and the *Impartial* gives the following account of the deception:

Two ladies presented themselves at a shop in the Rue St. Jacques, where the elder of them made purchases of goods, and then, taking out her purse, found that she had committed to bring with her the needful funds; she requested that one of the assistants should be sent home with her for the money, and a shopwoman accordingly accompanied the new customers. They went to a Carmelite convent, where the elder lady asked for one of the fathers by name, and on his coming to her, held some private conversation with him. In a few minutes the father made a sign to the girl to follow him.

"Go," said the lady, "follow the reverend father; he will pay you the amount."

The girl complied, and accompanied the friar into a room, where she was asked to sit down.

"I am ready," said the friar "to hear your confession."

"I don't want to confess," said the girl; "I want the money."

"What money?" said the friar.

"The price of the goods purchased by the lady who brought me here."

"I know nothing of that," said the friar; "she told me that you wished to confess, and being deaf, desired to do so in a quiet place."

The explanation was complete; the girl rushed out to find that the "ladies" had made good their escape, taking with them their cheap purchases.

At a meeting at Belfast, to consider the report of the committee of peers and members of the House of Commons on the subject of railway reform in Ireland, resolutions were adopted approving of the purchase of the railways by the State, and expressing the opinion that the fares should be reduced to the

following scale:—One penny a mile for first-class, three-farthings for second-class, and a halfpenny for third-class passengers.

MICHEL-DEVER.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

Two figures came up the walk. The full moon had risen and was casting long level beams of light over the restless sea and illuminating the portico within which Miss Digby and her guest sat. Thorne scarcely glanced at Alice; his whole attention was concentrated on her companion, and he thought he had never seen so graceful a woman; as Claire came forward with perfect command of face and mien, though her heart was throbbing as if it would burst from her bosom. She had suffered the shrouding folds of lace to fall back from her head, and as she stepped into the portico the moonlight revealed her fair face fully to those within it. Miss Digby marvelled at its serene repose, and Thorne was, for a moment, bewildered by the throng of thoughts and feelings that rushed upon him. This woman, lovely as a poet's ideal—graceful and self-possessed as a marble Diana, a fair representative of what Claire might have become in the lapse of years! Impossible! It was simply absurd for Miss Digby to have suggested such a thing. She did not look more than five-and-twenty at the utmost, and Claire must be over thirty.

Such were the thoughts that rushed through Walter Thorne's mind as he arose and drew forward seats for the two who had just entered. He was dazzled, bewildered by the vision of loveliness before him, but he could see little of the resemblance of which Miss Digby had spoken. He recalled an impassioned, unformed child, bewitching in her young beauty, but this was a mature and exquisite type of woman, with an air of repose and high breeding, in striking contrast to the impulsive being who had won his first love. She was taller by several inches than the Claire he remembered, and there was a depth and richness in the tones of her voice unknown to it in those early days.

When the introduction was over, and they were all seated, Claire was the first to speak:

"I am happy to meet with you, Mr. Thorne, for you are not so much a stranger to me as you may suppose. I have heard you often spoken of, and I had a desire to see you again before I leave this country."

"I am sure I am much flattered, madame, that you should entertain such a desire; that is, if it be not the offering of curiosity alone, and the wish to judge for yourself of a man who has had little good said of him. I may not merit all the censures that have been lavished upon me, but I deserve enough of them to render me very grateful for the good opinion of the few who still look on me as worthy of their friendship."

"He who can make friends must also make enemies," replied Claire, with her enchanting smile. "I never form my judgments from hearsay, especially of those in whom I am interested. I like originality, and even a spice of *diablerie* in a strong nature does not appeal me. But pray excuse me; I am speaking as if we were old acquaintances, instead of being in the first stage of what I hope will prove an agreeable and lasting friendship. You may judge from that if the person who spoke of you to me endeavoured to prejudice me against you."

"I am sure I am much obliged to—that person, whoever it may have been," Thorne replied, with some embarrassment. "The friendship of a fair lady, accustomed to every homage from my sex, is an honour I scarcely merit; but as it is so generously offered, I shall be most happy to lay claim to so precious a boon."

"Thank you for accepting my banter. I have a cause to win, when we are well enough acquainted for me to venture to approach you as a true friend."

Thorne bowed deferentially and replied: "No cause advocated by Madame L'Epine is likely to fail. I am only too highly honoured by the interest you manifest in my affairs."

"Take care; do not pledge yourself to more than you may be willing to perform," she replied, with an air of gay badinage, which he found infinitely fascinating.

Then, turning to Miss Digby, Claire changed the subject.

"Is not this an exquisite night? I felt tempted to walk for hours on the beach, but I remembered that you did not wish Alice to linger too long in the night air, and I thought it best to come back."

"That was well remembered, my dear, for I wish both yourself and Alice to be in perfect health and spirits to-morrow evening. Beautiful as the night is, a faint mist is beginning to rise from the water, and I think we had better go into the house."

"Not quite yet," Claire entreated. "This moonlight is so enchanting, that I shrink from exchanging it for the glare of the lamp."

Miss Digby yielded, and the conversation flowed on, each one bearing a part in it for half-an-hour longer. Then the visitor reluctantly arose, and said:

"I will not trespass on your hospitality longer to-night, Ada, although I find myself in a more congenial atmosphere than any in which I have lately lived. I thank you again most heartily for the chance to renew the peace between us, and I assure you that on my side it shall never be endangered again. I intend to follow the advice my old nurse used to give me and turn over a new leaf in my life, on which I hope to inscribe something better than has gone before."

Miss Digby gave him her hand and cordially replied:

"If you are true to your pledge, Walter, no one will rejoice in it more than myself. I shall expect you to-morrow morning, and I grant the request you made to set as my nearest kinsman. Good-night."

"Good night," fell from the lips of Claire, bowed, smiled, and raised a bewildering glance to his face. She saw that he flushed even in the pale moonlight, and with a sense of triumph mingled with pain, she felt that the first step towards the victory for which she had so sedulously prepared herself had been taken.

She stood watching his retreating figure till the gate closed on him, and then with a faint smile returned to Alice, who was saying:

"What a distinguished-looking man Mr. Thorne is. I am sure no one would think that he has a daughter nearly as old as I am. Will he bring him with him to-morrow, Aunt Ada?"

"No, my dear; but I hope that we may be able to induce him to bring May to us when we are settled. I should like to have her with me, for I take a deep interest in her."

"If Madame L'Epine asks him to do so, I believe he will," said Alice, mischievously. "I think he was evidently charmed by her, for he looked at and listened to her as if he had no thought for anyone else near him."

"Jealous, petite," laughed Claire, tapping her on the cheek with an affectionate playfulness she was far from feeling at that moment. "I am not sure that he will not prefer your budding charms after all to my more mature ones. Men of his age are apt to admire the sweet simplicity of early youth."

"He is hardly old enough for that. Mr. Thorne does not look more than thirty, though I suppose he is a few years older."

"I daresay he would be immensely flattered if he heard you say that, Alice, for he is nearer forty than thirty. I agree with you that he is handsome and distinguished; but a man should be something more than that."

"Yes, good and true, like papa; and Mr. Thorne is gay, reckless, what some people call fast, I have heard. But he is very agreeable for all that. Don't you think so, madame? If you don't you are very ungrateful, for he evidently admires you very much."

"So much the worse for him then," said Claire, with another laugh that sounded strangely to the young girl, and she more gravely said:

"Pardon me, for attempting to banter you on such a subject. I am too young to take such a liberty; but you are so good to me that I forgot myself."

Claire kissed her, and gaily said:

"No harm has been done, my dear; and you know that I allow you to speak to me with perfect freedom. Let us go in, for the night is becoming chilly."

She shivered as she spoke, and drew her lace mantle over her shoulders. Alice threw her arm caressingly around her, and they followed Miss Digby, who had already gone in, and was waiting for them in the hall.

Daily intercourse with Claire for the few past weeks had awakened in the heart of Alice one of those enthusiastic attachments often felt by a young girl on the threshold of life for a brilliant and beautiful woman of mature years. They were fast friends; for Claire also found much to interest her in the affectionate and simple-hearted girl, who so naively expressed her admiration for herself.

They went into the library, and Claire sat down before the open piano, and dashed into a strong piece of music, which well expressed the state of her own soul. It was yet too early to retire, and feeling herself incapable of taking part in any conversation, however trivial, she took refuge in music, mechanically playing piece after piece with such brilliancy and power as even she rarely displayed.

When ten o'clock rang out from the bronze time-piece on the mantelpiece, she abruptly rose, and said:

"I believe I will retire now, for I am afraid that I have wearied you both with playing so long."

"I have enjoyed it," said Miss Digby, quietly, "and so, I am sure, has Alice. I have never heard you play with such brilliancy before."

"You must have thrown your soul into the music to produce such an effect," said Alice; "but I think it must be a very stormy soul, in spite of the beauty of the night."

Claire looked at her with eyes glittering with excitement, and laughing faintly, said:

"You will never understand the inspiration of that music, Alice, for your nature and mine are wide as the poles asunder. When you say your prayers to-night, thank heaven that it is so, my dear, for you are formed for quiet happiness, and I feel at this moment as if I were born to dwell in a tornado, and scatter lightning, with reckless disregard as to where the bolt may strike."

Alice looked at her with wondering eyes, but she made no reply, for Miss Digby arose, and said:

"The fatigues of the day have been too much for you, Claire, and you are one of your moods. Let us retire at once. Good-night, Alice—I will come to your room before you are asleep, but I wish to talk with Madame L'Epine alone a few moments."

Claire had gone to the open window, and was leaning from it, that the cool air of night might allay the fever in the blood that seemed seething in her veins. Alice did not venture to approach her, for the hand of Miss Digby warned her not to do so. She left the room, wondering what had occurred to produce such a state of excitement in the calm and stately woman, who so much admired.

When she was gone, Miss Digby drew near the window, and softly said:

"My dear Claire, this meeting has been too much for you. Yet you bore yourself so gracefully and naturally through the ordeal, that I own it surprises me to see you give way so suddenly now."

Claire looked around with a face as colourless as marble, and almost as rigid. She saw that Alice had left the room; she advanced a step towards Miss Digby, and threw herself into her arms, with a sobbing cry that seemed to be rent from the depths of her soul.

It was many moments before she could speak, her friend almost carried her to a sofa, and sat down beside her, still supporting her shuddering form.

At length, in faint, broken tones, she said:

"Oh! Ada, it was worse than death to sit before him, calm to all outward seeming, and remember those days in which we were all in all to each other; to feel that we were so near, yet so far apart, almost maddened me. Yet I betrayed nothing—tell me, did I give him any cause to suspect anything?"

"No, I marvelled at your composure, and wondered at your daring in speaking as you did to him when you first met."

"Ah! that is a part of my plan you know. I am to use my influence to bring him back to his first allegiance, and if he would only prove true, and honourable, I would forego my revenge—yes, forego it—and be glad to make him a happier and perhaps, a better man. But he will not, Ada! He will give up all thoughts of the injured wife, and seek his own gratification, as he always has done, at the sacrifice of principle. Already has a new passion been kindled in his heart for one he believes a stranger. He will leave poor Claire to be 'whistled down the wind, a prey to fortune,' while he suns himself in the smiles of the one he is ready to give her as a rival, unconscious that the two are identical."

"Well, my dear, why should you complain of that? If Walter has conceived so sudden a passion for you, it only proves that you are his true mate, and great was the iniquity that separated you. Do not be too exacting, Claire, but accept the late atonement, even if it be offered to you as a stranger."

Claire raised her head, and with sudden self-control said:

"Yes, I shall accept it, as I have already assured you. But it would be well for him to listen to my pleadings on behalf of his deserted wife. If he did that, I would reveal myself to him, ask his forgiveness for all I have planned to torture him in his turn, and try to make him happy. But he will not, Ada, you will see—you will see."

There was sharp anguish in the tones in which the last words were uttered, and she burst into tears.

Miss Digby said all that was possible to soothe her, and bring her back to calmness, but it was long before she succeeded. When they at last separated for the night, the last words of Claire to her friend were:

"Remember that my secret must be kept at all hazards. I must try him, and if there be any gold left in the dross of his nature, he will respond to my wishes. If there be not—then heaven help me!"

Echoing the passionate prayer, Miss Digby kissed her, and left her at the door of her own chamber.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

On the following morning there was a joyful reunion at Seaview cottage. Louise arrived, accompanied by Madame S——, and Mr. Balfour.

Louise was looking delicate and slightly worn—but she was her old affectionate self; and the way she clung to Miss Digby proved that her late feelings towards her had undergone an entire revolution. As her friend held her in her arms, the child whispered:

"Dear mother, if you were not the best woman in the world, you could not so freely and fully forgive your wayward child. I am yours now in heart—in everything; and to make myself like you in goodness and sweetness of nature is my first wish. Since I wrote that letter I have dreamed again of my own mamma, and she smiled on me as only an angel spirit can smile, and whispered to my inner sense: 'At last you are in the right path, my darling; guided by the loving heart that seeks to influence you only for your good, you will find the pearl of great price, and through its renovating power mature into noble and true womanhood.'"

Miss Digby clasped her more tenderly to her heart, and kissing her fervently, said:

"I accept the charge thus delegated to me, Louise, and I will be to you all that your own mother could have been had she lived to watch over you."

She released her, and advanced to welcome Madame S——; for in her impatience to see her friends again, Louise had sprung from the carriage as soon as it stopped, and rushed towards the house with all the impetuosity of her nature.

The Frenchwoman was presented to Claire; and delighted to find one who knew Paris so well and spoke her own language so charmingly, she soon plunged into an animated conversation, and in one hour was so much at home, that she began to busy herself in helping to arrange the flowers with which Claire had undertaken to decorate the rooms.

Alice went with her sister to their own apartment; and Louise, after taking off her hat and mantle, turned to her, and throwing her arms around her, said:

"You have not told me yet that you forgive me for all I did before I went away, Alice. I will tell you the truth, sister, as a just penance. I was afraid that you would be best loved by our new mother, and I could not bear the thought that both papa and you should come before me. I was jealous of everything. I hated to have mamma's place filled, because papa would care more for the new wife than he did for me; because you would give her more love than you could afford to give me. Was it not selfish and base to feel so? But I am getting over that—I am trying to deserve to be loved, and then I shall have as much as I have a right to."

"Oh, Lou, we all love you dearly, be sure of that—we would do anything for you; and if you will only keep in this reasonable frame of mind, we shall be as happy together as people are in fairy tales. You must not speak of yourself as base, for there is no such taint in your true and affectionate nature."

The communion between the sisters was long and tender, but at length Alice arose from the sofa on which they sat clasped in each other's arms, and said:

"Come, dear, we must not forget others in the joy of our reunion. I promised to assist Madame L'Epine to decorate the room with flowers, and you must lend us the aid of your nimble fingers, too."

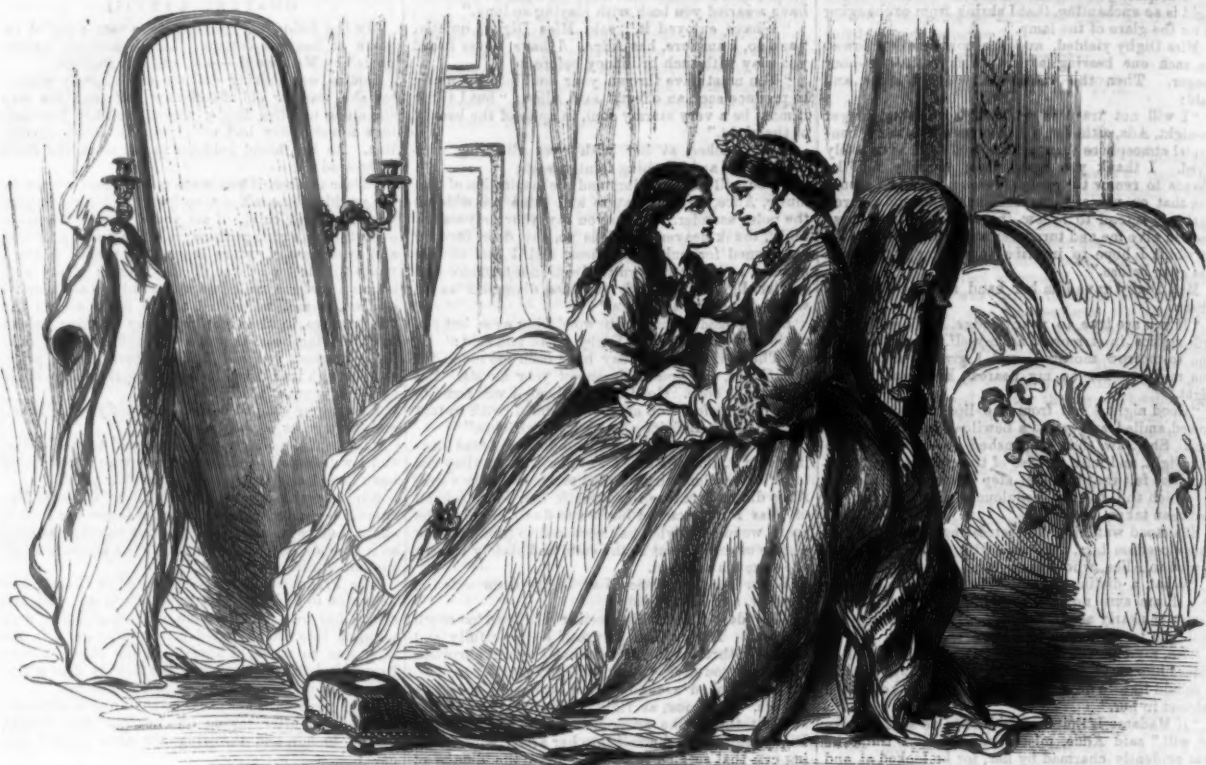
"Oh, how gladly I will do it, Alice. I feel like a bird released from its cage, and in place of wailing and gnashing my teeth as I thought I should the day papa got married again, I could dance for joy. You don't know how kind he was to me—how tender, even when I was so naughty. When he came for me the other day, I felt ashamed to meet him; but he soon made me feel that I was so completely forgiven that he would not even remember how severely I had tried him. He took me to the bazaar, and allowed me to choose such beautiful things for myself!"

"Neither did Aunt Ada forget you, Louise. She thought all the time that you would come to your right senses before the wedding, and she had dresses made up for you as handsome as mine. We are going to Paris next week, and we shall need them there."

"She thought of me and provided for me, even when I was doing all I could to worry and annoy her. Oh, Alice, if I ever fall back into my old perversity I shall deserve to be awfully punished."

"There is little danger of that, Lou. You have had your trial and come out of it as good as gold. If you should be in danger of relapsing, think of your dream and you will cast from you the temptation to do so."

"Yes, that will help me," she replied, in a hushed tone.



[LOUISE'S OFFERING.]

"Oh, Alice! I saw mamma as plainly as I see you now, and since that time a new spirit seems to have entered my heart. I believe that henceforth she will be my guardian angel, and aid me to check every mean and ungenerous feeling as it arises."

"With that belief, dear, you can never go very far wrong again," said Alice, with starting tears, for the memory of her mother was very dear to her, though she had not been so unreasonable as to insist that her father should sacrifice his happiness to it.

The party was a merry one, in spite of the various emotions which animated at least two of them. Claire, with the long habit of self-control, had recovered outward serenity, and she looked as bright and animated as if no struggle had lately convulsed her soul to its inmost depths.

The rooms looked beautiful with their floral decorations, and every one complimented Claire on the taste which had produced so charming an effect.

She presided over the toilette of the bride, and then retired to make her own. Miss Digby had refused to be married in white, as she declared it to be unsuitable to her age. She wore a pearl-gray silk trimmed with point lace, with a collar of the same, fastened at the throat with a diamond pin, the bridal gift of Mr. Balfour. Her hair was folded in smooth bands around her finely-shaped head, and fastened in a knot behind, which lay low upon her neck. A few gray hairs threaded her abundant locks, but they were scarcely noticeable amid the shining coils, and as she stood before her dressing table, drawing her perfectly-fitting gloves on her shapely hands, she was a handsome woman still.

Louise came in, robed in floating clouds of tulle looped with white rosebuds, and shyly carrying something in her hand which she held behind her. She looked up at the beaming face that welcomed her, and exclaimed:

"Oh, mother! how handsome you are! I never saw you look so well before, but it is because you are happy, I suppose."

"Yes, Louise, I am happy. This day I assume responsibilities, the discharge of which will render the remaining days of my life of more value than its heyday has been. You shall be the first to kiss me in my bridal robes, and with that carress take the promise that you shall have as tender a place in my heart as it has to give."

She bent forward and Louise raised herself on tiptoe to reach her lips; at the same moment the concealed hand went up, and a wreath of orange blossoms was dextrously placed on the bent head of the bride.

Louise hurriedly said:

"That is my offering, mother, and if you refuse to wear it I shall think that you have not forgiven the insolent impertinence of which I was guilty in my letter to Alice. I bought it for you myself, and it is beautiful and very becoming."

Miss Digby glanced at herself in the mirror, and with a smile said:

"Even if I found the flowers unbecoming, Louise, I would not refuse to wear them under the circumstances. But I agree with you that with a little arrangement, they will complete my toilette more tastefully than if I had done without them. Use your skilful fingers, my dear, in putting the last touches to my costume."

Louise was enraptured! Miss Digby placed herself on a low seat, and the wreath was twined round the coils of her hair with graceful effect: a kiss fell on them when all was done, and Louise humbly said:

"Never, if I can help it, will I do anything to turn a thread of this to silver. You have been an angel of goodness to me ever since I have been with you, and yet I could give you so much pain as I have lately done."

"My darling, your latest actions have only afforded me exquisite happiness, by proving to me that my Louise possesses all the generous and noble traits of character for which I have given her credit. There, love, do not excite yourself; you must not shed a tear, even in penitence, on this evening."

Louise wiped away the bright drops that glistened on her long lashes, and with a brilliant smile turned to greet her sister who had just entered, attired in a robe similar to her own. Alice glanced at the flowers and gaily said:

"I told her you would wear them for her sake, and you look charmingly in them, Aunt Ada. Oh, I forgot, you are my mother now, and I must give you the name you have long had in my heart."

She knelt before her, raised the hand that was still ungloved, and placed on the third finger a diamond solitaire; then lifting it to her lips, Alice added:

"This is my offering, and papa will place over it the guard in the shape of the wedding-ring."

As Alice arose, Miss Digby kissed her, and thanked her for the superb gift which sparkled on her finger. She regarded the two sisters with benignant eyes, and softly added, as she placed a hand on the shoulder of each:

"After all, I can say as the Roman mother did, 'These are my jewels.' My daughters shall be as the polished corners of the temple of happiness of which I hope to be the high priestess in the years

that loom before us. I have prayed earnestly to be only a minister of good to those with whom I am about to link my fate, and I have faith to believe that my prayer will be granted."

"I am sure it will," came simultaneously from the lips of both girls.

At that moment a tap was struck upon the door, and Claire entered. She wore a robe of pale azure silk, striped with silver, and trimmed with puffings of tulle. Her fair neck and rounded arms were bare, and a parure of exquisite cameos completed her simple yet elegant toilette. Her magnificent nut-brown hair was coiled around her small head in a fashion peculiar to herself, and over the left ear drooped a single spray of fresh rosebuds gathered from the garden.

Few who looked on that brilliant and most lovely face would have dreamed of the sea of sorrow through which she had battled—of the surging waves of the storm that was again rising to drive her barque of life on the same rocks from which it had once so narrowly escaped utter shipwreck.

Her eyes glittered with unrest, and her scarlet lips quivered with repressed emotion, but she did not shrink or falter. She felt that she would be sufficient to herself in the ordeal she was about to encounter, and she dreaded no farther passionate outbreak on her own part, similar to the one of the previous night.

She smilingly said:

"Everything is in readiness, and Mr. Balfour awaits permission to come for you. Shall I unclothe the magic portal and bid him enter?"

"I am quite ready," replied Miss Digby. "If I were a vain woman, I should be unwilling for the three graces to pass before me; but as I am not, I wish you to walk between Alice and Louise, and precede Mr. Balfour and myself. You will distract attention from the elderly couple coming after you."

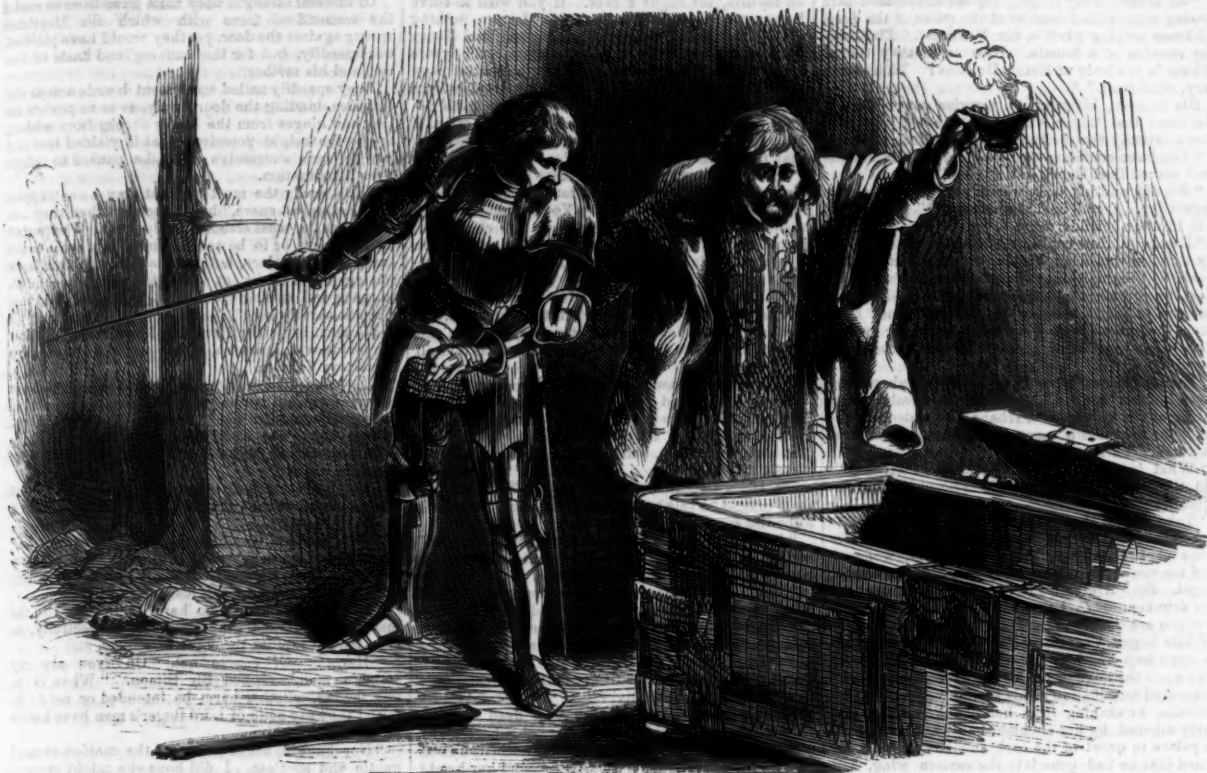
Claire laughed archly, and replied:

"If you only knew how handsome you are to-night, Ada, you would not consider such a diversion necessary. However it shall be as you wish."

She opened the door which led into the hall, and made a sign to one of a group of gentlemen standing a short distance from it. Mr. Balfour came forward at once, and in a few more moments the party came forth, arranged as the bride had wished.

When they reached the parlour, the minister was in his place. Walter Thorne stood ready to give the bride away, and the other guests, about twenty in number, invited the most of them by Mr. Balfour, were grouped together in different parts of the room

(To be continued.)



[THE OLD CHEST.]

THE FLOWER GIRL.

CHAPTER XXII.

SIR MORTIMER and the earl stood before the long-sealed door, the former resolute and stern, the latter trembling with craven fear.

"The key? Open it," commanded Sir Mortimer.

"The key? There is no key," replied the earl, whose face was ashy-white with fear. "The key was lost—thrown away twenty-three years ago. Why should I keep it? Why? Enough, Sir Mortimer. Let the dead rest. You will find nothing but bones, nothing but a skeleton—the skeleton of—"

"Of whom?" demanded the knight, confronting the terror-trembling earl. "Man, confess that the tale of Roland Bart was true. Confess that you and that accursed woman placed Henry De Ross, alive, in that chest."

The earl hesitated, for his haughty spirit writhed under compulsion. Yet his cunning brain suggested that he might confess and never be harmed, for he had resolved to effect the death of the knight ere he should leave the palace.

He hesitated for a moment and then replied:

"Tis true that I placed his body there, but he was dead, and by my faith, sir knight, has he not slept as soundly there as he would in the vaults of De Ross?"

"False and cruel! Barbarous villain!" exclaimed the knight. "Earl Henry was alive when your murderous hands enfolded him there. Great heaven! one would think that your sleep would be full of horrid dreams. Imagine the awful death of agony which the noble De Ross must have died, shut up alive in that chest! May heaven in its mercy have decreed that he sank to death unconscious of his dying. The key is lost, you say. It does not matter. It must be opened."

"It has never been opened, Sir Mortimer, since the body of the earl was placed therein. I did not lock it when I placed him there, though the key was then in the lock. Sibilla Thornbuck returned to the hovel on the day after the battle, locked the chest and threw the key away. She was in haste, for the hovel was filled with wounded men, nor did she dare to raise the heavy lid, lest the body of the earl should be recognised, and the suspicion of the king be excited. I admit it was a hasty and foolish deed. Better had it been had we left the earl as I found him—dead. But my enemies would have said that I slew him for my gain."

"Roger Vagram," said Sir Mortimer, solemnly,

"heaven caused Nicholas Flame to find a key near that hovel while he sought for the chest. Heaven bade him preserve it. He gave it to me when, in after years, we met—"

"Why to you?" broke in the earl, eagerly.

"Because I am the son of Henry De Ross, late Earl De Montfort," replied the knight, proudly.

"His son! He never had a son. He was never even married," exclaimed the earl. "Ah, this is some imposture! Someone, perhaps this meddling Nicholas Flame, has told you that in form, voice, and feature, you strangely resemble Henry De Ross. Or, who can say? He was gay. You may be even his son. But Henry De Ross was never married."

"Silence! We will speak of that hereafter," said Sir Mortimer, sternly. "You may have other confessions to make, Roger Vagram."

The guilty man was appalled by the calm solemnity of the young knight. He was astounded, too, at his daring in thus assuming the part of a judge, and bearding him in his own palace.

Had anyone told Roger Vagram that he, bold, cunning, powerful, accustomed to see the eyes of his many retainers fall beneath his angry glance, would live to cower like a helpless criminal in the presence of his judge, and before a young knight alone, he would have smitten the daring speaker to the earth.

He could only tremble and remain silent. Yet, with all his terror his busy brain was at work, plotting the speedy destruction of the knight.

"This is the key," continued Sir Mortimer, taking a large one from his bosom, and holding it up. "I could shatter the lock or the chest with my foot, or with those bricks, or with that iron bar at your feet, Roger Vagram. But I would not rudely disturb the hallowed remains of my murdered father. I have carried this key upon my breast many a year, and prayed to heaven that my hand might some day or other place it in the lock of this chest. Heaven has granted my prayer. Pour some of the oil of that lamp upon it, for the works of the lock must be fast with rust. Enough," he added, as the shaking hands of the earl slowly obeyed. "Now we will see whether this key was that which was thrown away by Sibilla Thornbuck."

He inserted the key, and a strong wrench of his powerful hand and wrist was answered by a loud snap.

The chest was unlocked. Sir Mortimer placed his hand upon the lid and turned his eyes upon the guilty earl.

The gaze of Roger Vagram was a start of terror and expectation. His eyes were dilated and fixed upon the lid. His murderous work, sealed up for

nearly a quarter of a century, was about to be revealed, and by one who claimed to be the son of the murdered earl.

Perhaps decay and time had not done their destructive work upon the form and features of the dead? Perhaps fate had preserved them intact, and he was about to gaze upon the face of his noble victim? Perhaps those dark and scornful eyes had not withered and changed to air, but remained to meet his with a glassy, ghastly, accusing stare?

"Is it fear or remorse that makes Roger Vagram tremble?" demanded the stern knight, whose youth seemed to add to his terrible air of delayed but surely coming vengeance.

The guilty man made an attempt to reply. His quivering lips shook his beard—no more. No word passed them. Nothing save a gibbering groan, which spoke only terror and guilt.

Sir Mortimer raised his eyes to heaven, saying in a solemn tone, tremulous with emotion:

"Father! father! who died ere your sad son was born, forgive me for the molestation of thy hallowed remains."

He raised the lid, and as he did so the rust-eaten hinges snapped and crumbled. The heavy lid fell from his hand, and shattered upon the floor.

The chest was open. The light of the lamp filled its interior—and revealed a human skeleton.

There was that, however, which was not expected to be seen by either of the two amazed beholders. They had expected to see a skeleton clad in armour, that of a tall and powerfully-framed man, clad in steel and iron, with helmet and harness of battle—all too large for a form of which the flesh had mouldered into dust. But they beheld no such spectacle.

The ghastly, grinning skull was there, and the fleshless bones, dread relics of perishable mortality, but not the skull and bones of a mail-clad warrior. Fragments of decayed garments, rings of gold upon the skeleton fingers, bracelets of pearl upon the fleshless wrists, a necklace of precious stones around the remains of the vertebrae of the neck, the long fair hair still adhering to the skull, the smallness of every bone, the size and fashion of the shoes of leather embroidered with gems and golden lace—all these declared, beyond all doubt, that the oaken chest contained not the skeleton of a man, but of a woman!

Of a woman, young and wealthy. Where then was the body of Earl Henry?

"What means this?" exclaimed Sir Mortimer, after a glance had revealed all. "Roger Vagram, these are not the remains of him whom you placed in this chest."

"As heaven is my judge," replied the amazed earl, staring in boundless wonder at the relics of the dead, "I know nothing of this, Sir Mortimer. These are the remains of a female. How came they there? Where is the body of Henry De Ross? This is sorcery, witchcraft."

His manner, his genuine surprise convinced Sir Mortimer that Roger Vagram spoke truly in averring so stoutly that he knew nothing of the mystery.

"You have confessed that you and Sibilla Thornbuck placed Earl Henry in this chest."

"We did, and his body was never removed, to my knowledge. Could he have escaped?" gasped the earl, in utter bewilderment.

"Escaped? How could he have escaped, when you say that he was dead before you placed him in the chest? Villain, it may be that you believed this chest to contain the remains of the earl—I believe that you so firmly believed, or you would not have taken the precautions you have—but your words prove that you knew him to be alive when you placed him there."

"He might not have been dead, though we believed he was," replied Roger Vagram, trembling and staring at the knight. "Perhaps," he added, recoiling, "you may know more of this escape than I of his death. This is sorcery!"

"What is sorcery? Who speaks of sorcery?" said the harsh voice of Sibilla Thornbuck, in the adjoining room.

"Take care of the pit!" cried the earl, as she advanced the lamp so that its rays might warn the sorceress of her danger. "Are you wiser, woman? Give me your hand. Be steady now! Walk around the pit. So. Are you sober? Have you slept off your drunkenness? I am grieved that you have come. Now you are over."

While Roger Vagram assisted his mother across the open trap and into the room, Sir Mortimer sat down upon the edge of the chest, overcome with the unexpected termination of his search.

Sibilla, awakening from her drunken sleep, and nearly sobered by her slumber, had wandered about the palace in quest of the earl, and having been informed that he had gone into the eastern wing, had followed until the sound of voices had led her steps to the walled-up apartment.

Of the presence of Sir Mortimer in the palace she was ignorant, and on crossing the trap and entering the room her back was towards the knight, until the earl grasped her arm, saying:

"There is sorcery here! Look at the contents of the chest!"

The rays of the lamp fell brightly upon the face and form of Sir Mortimer as he sat upon the edge of the chest. His face was very pale and sad, though his bright, dark eyes gazed steadily upon the woman as she turned and faced him.

"Mercy! Pardon, my lord!" exclaimed Sibilla, falling upon her knees and covering her face in her robes. "Has the grave given up its dead? Mercy, Earl Henry! We thought you were dead when we—"

"Fool!" cried Roger Vagram, as he shook her angrily. "I speak not of him who sits upon the chest. That is simply Sir Mortimer De Vane. I speak of what is in the chest."

"The bones of Earl Henry! Of the spirit who glares at us!" cried the terrified woman, still hiding her face. "Yes, this is indeed sorcery!"

"Woman, I tell you the sorcery is within and not without the chest," insisted the earl, angrily. "Go, look into it, and you will not see the bones of Earl Henry, but those of a woman. How came they there?"

"Of a woman?" muttered Sibilla, rising slowly, and gradually recognising Sir Mortimer as Mortimer Clair. "The bones of a woman? That cannot be?"

"Go see for yourself," said the earl, impatiently.

Sir Mortimer, who narrowly watched the features and movements of the sorceress, drew aside that she might look into the chest. The earl advanced by her side, holding the lamp.

Sibilla gazed into the chest, expecting to see a skeleton in armour, the skeleton of Earl Henry.

She screamed and recoiled, as she saw that the remains were those of a woman.

"Ah," thought Sir Mortimer, as he marked her amazement, "these two vile wretches whom some secret, and doubtless criminal tie binds together, cannot explain this new mystery!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

ROGER VAGRAM was the first to break the silence which followed the scream of the sorceress.

She was speechless from surprise and terror. She rolled her eyes from the knight to the earl, and then to the chest, in utter amazement.

"Sir Mortimer," said the earl, coldly, "this mystery I cannot explain. It may remain a secret to me

all my life, for aught I care. If you wish to solve it you must not expect my aid. I care nothing about the matter, one way or another. If Earl Henry survived he would have made his appearance years ago to claim his earldom. No doubt he revived, and made his escape from the chest, and afterwards from England to the unknown abroad. Perhaps he perished in the forest near Towton, and his body, if found, was buried unrecognized. At least we know that these remains are not his."

"No; these remains are not those of Earl Henry," replied Sir Mortimer, in a sad tone.

"You are satisfied of that. You demanded that I should show you the contents of this chest, and, much against my will, I have done so. Have you any more business in the Montfort palace?"

"At present, none."

"Nor in future, I trust," Sir Mortimer De Vane.

"He has another name," cried the sorceress, beginning to recover her lost courage, though still startled by all she saw. "He sometimes calls himself Mortimer Clair."

"Clair!" exclaimed the earl. "Did you say Clair?"

"Aye, Clair; and his mother is at this moment in London. If she is not Mabel St. Orme she is her ghost in the flesh. Black hair, black eyes, dimple just here in her chin, and a mole just above it."

"Ah!" hissed Roger Vagram from between his teeth, while he gazed at the knight. "There may be more danger to me abroad than I dreamed. He claims to be the son of Earl Henry."

"Does he? Then never doubt it, my lord," whispered Sibilla, staring at Sir Mortimer, who was plunged in deep and bitter thought.

"But Mabel St. Orme was drowned, woman," replied the earl. "Nor had she a child!"

"We feared she might, you remember. Earl Henry was her husband, and had been so for months before her death. It seems incredible, yet I say Mabel St. Orme, who married Earl Henry, but knew him only as Rihalbert Clair, still lives."

"Impossible! Woman, she was dead ere we tossed her into the river. And had she been alive, what miracle could have saved her life when she was cast into the river with a sack tied round her head? Pshaw! Mabel St. Orme never lived to have a child."

"But I tell you I have seen her, since the sun went down yesterday eve. I could not believe my own eyes. But, since he claims to be the son of Earl Henry, I have no doubt that his mother is the woman whom I saw, and that she is Mabel St. Orme."

"If so, he is the rightful heir of the title and earldom," said the earl. "I imagined it possible that he might be a son, an illegitimate son of Earl Henry, from his extraordinary resemblance to the earl, and for that I hated him. For his insolence, and because he knew so much of what I have striven to conceal, I resolved he should never leave this palace alive. That resolution was based upon personal dislike. That resolution has become self-preservation. He must die, or I may live to see him Earl De Montfort, while I perish, Roger Vagram, upon the scaffold, hanged by the neck for infamous crimes. He must not leave the palace."

"My lord," said Sir Mortimer, shaking off the reverie into which he had fallen, "I have seen the contents of the chest. I am satisfied about that, and at present have no farther business with Earl De Montfort."

"Then you, though claiming to be the son of him whose remains you expected to find in that chest, do not claim to be his legal son and heir?" asked the earl.

"I have said, Lord Roger, that I have no farther business with you at present," replied Sir Mortimer, haughtily. "If you did not murder my father, you, doubtless, intended to do so, and have believed that you did, until now. What I may hereafter see fit to do is my affair, not yours. Precede me with the lamp; I wish to leave the palace immediately."

The tone and bearing of Sir Mortimer evinced a determination not to be balked, and even the sorceress, with all her effrontery, recoiled from his menacing look.

"Come!" said the earl, "I am right willing to be rid of this gentleman."

He recrossed the trap, assisted Sibilla across, whispered a command as he did so, and then both rushed from the outer room into the hall, shutting and locking the door instantly.

He dropped the lamp as he sprang away, and it lay upon the floor, unextinguished.

Sir Mortimer was in the act of leaping across the pit as the earl locked the door. He bounded against it with desperate haste, hoping that the lock would give way, for the door opened outwards.

But the lock was strong, for the jealous guilt of Roger Vagram, not content with walling up the room adjoining, had taken extraordinary care to have this door and lock of unusual strength.

Of unusual strength they must have been to resist the tremendous force with which Sir Mortimer sprang against the door, yet they would have yielded, and speedily, but for the cunning and haste of the earl and his mother.

They speedily nailed some stout boards across the entrance, binding the door firmly, so as to protect its lock and hinges from the heavy shocks from within, and as the knight perceived that it yielded less and less to each successive effort, he paused to reflect upon his situation.

"How easily the most vigilant may be entrapped by the simplest snare," he thought, "when they are expecting the most elaborate wiles only. I expected deepunning, or to be assailed by many, ere I could pass from the palace, but dreamed not of this simple stratagem. Thanks, at least, for this," he added, stooping and raising the lamp. "This may aid me, if aught earthly can."

We must leave Sir Mortimer for a time, to follow the fortunes of Lauretta, whom we left pursued by Sir Simon Vagram.

The persecuted maiden for a moment gained upon her pursuers, but her strength was already exhausted by her labours in escaping from the house of Callias, so that before she had taken many steps her limbs sank beneath her, and she fell heavily and senseless upon the ground.

Sir Simon's retainers were soon near her, and at the command of their exultant chief placed her on a litter.

"Now make all haste to the De Montfort palace," he said; adding to himself, "It is a wonder to me how she effected her escape from the tapestried chamber; but time presses and I can learn to-morrow."

"I trust, my master, no harm is intended to the maiden," remarked Andrew Tarl, respectfully, as they moved rapidly through the streets.

"Harm! Of course not. Oh! you are my father's man," replied Sir Simon. "What is to you, knave, whether harm be intended or not? In faith! they say none of Lord Roger's men have hearts of sheep."

"Nor have I, Sir Simon, yet the maiden seemed gentle and spotless. I did hope she might escape; yet as your worship said, it is no affair of mine, happen what may. Her face of woe haunts me, though. I saw it as your men came up with torches, and it reminded me much of a noble lady whom I served in my youth."

"Ah, and who was that noble lady?" quickly asked Sir Simon, who longed to penetrate the mystery that enveloped Lauretta; his father not having seen fit to enlighten him in the matter.

"A noble lady, Sir Simon, who thought simple and faithful Andrew Tarl her enemy. Well, well, my master, poor lady, she had a sore heart and her mind might well be warped. She discharged me, and I have never seen her since that night when she was told her infant daughter had fallen into the Thames with her nurse, and that both were drowned."

"Her name, Andrew?"

"She was Lady Lottie, the wife of Sir Albert Tempest, sir."

"I have never seen her, though I have heard I am of no very remote kin to Lady Lottie. Her husband I have seen, and do not like him, though it is said I may claim him as a cousin in some degree. The child was drowned, then, and its nurse?"

"Too true, my master; though it was rumoured that one Sibilla Thornbuck—mayhap your worship has heard of that old witch? They call her the sorceress."

"Yes, I have heard of, and seen her. What of her, Andrew?"

"It was rumoured that she had something to do with the drowning of the infant—accidentally, I think, they said. She stumbled against the nurse, who was carrying the child in her arms, on the river bank."

"The bodies of the nurse and child were found, no doubt?"

"That of the nurse was, but never that of the infant. Lady Lottie blamed me in the matter, as it was my duty that day to keep the nurse and child in sight, my master. But I was young and foolish then, and a bright eye in a pretty face led me astray; indeed, I thought it ignoble duty to play escort to a nurse and child, so I left them, fearing no harm to either, nor knew anything of the misfortune, until someone asked me how Lady Lottie took the news of the drowning. I have grieved ever since over the matter; and Lady Lottie was right in declaring that she never wished to see my face again in Tempest House."

"And this maiden in the litter resembles Lady Lottie?"

"I say not that, Sir Simon. I only say that, as your torches flared in her face, I saw an expression there which made me think she looked as Lady Lottie did when they told her that her child was drowned."

I do remember now that I saw this same maiden in Shingly Green, in company with Sir Mortimer Du Vane, to-day."

Here Andrew Tarl became silent, for it suddenly occurred to him that he had pledged his word to Sir Mortimer to serve him, and, no doubt, this aiding in the abduction of the flower girl was far from serving the absent knight.

"Now let me keep my eyes and ears open, and my tongue still," thought the dull but honest soldier. "There is some villainy afoot here, and as the good knight gave me my life, when my heart was under his knee, I will serve him a good turn if I can. Perhaps Sir Mortimer loves the maiden, and I fain would serve under the banner of so great a warrior, rather than under my stingy and scheming lord's."

The party soon arrived at the private entrance of the De Montfort palace, and as they did so, Sir Simon saw that Lauretta had recovered from her swoon.

She raised herself in the litter, which was curtailed, and thrusting them aside, gazed in bewilderment around.

"Silence, lady," commanded Sir Simon, who feared she might scream and thus attract more attention than he cared to rouse. "It will be useless for you to shriek or call for aid, and if you do we must gag you."

"Oh, mercy! I will not scream," pleaded Lauretta, who felt weak and faint from all she had suffered. "I pray you, Sir Simon Vagram, as you claim to be a man and a noble gentleman, do not gag me."

"No fear of that, unless with kisses of love," simpered the heartless libertine, as he assisted Lauretta from the litter, and leered at her insolently.

"Heaven save me from that!" thought the poor girl, shrinking from his flaming eyes. "I'd rather be gagged than receive his kisses."

As her feet touched the ground her eyes met those of Andrew Tarl, who laid his hand upon his forehead and then upon his breast. It was a gesture well understood in those days, and signified that he who made it was vowing life and soul in her service.

It surprised while it rejoiced the friendless flower girl to find a friend among her captors, yet she dared not show that she had noticed the gesture, lest others might suspect.

"Lean on my arm, lady," said Sir Simon, as they entered the gate of the palace garden.

"I do not like you, Sir Simon," she replied, boldly. "Were you a true friend you would not have treated me as you have. Yet I am weak, and with your permission I will take the arm of that gray-haired soldier there."

"Hol the arm of old Andrew Tarl!" exclaimed Sir Simon, laughing. "Now, what taste, to prefer the arm of an old, withered man to that of a handsome young knight. But I will not gainsay your wish, lady, as I have something to say to one of my men. Come, Andrew Tarl, and let this lady have the aid of your arm to the palace."

The soldier came forward and Lauretta placed her tiny hand upon his shoulder, as if to support her feeble steps. Sir Simon fell to the rear, and after a sharp "move on!" began to converse with one of his men upon some matter of his own.

What that matter was has nothing to do with our story, yet it so absorbed the attention of the knight that he saw and heard nothing of what passed between Lauretta and Andrew Tarl.

Those with torches were in advance, and Lauretta whispered:

"Did you vow to be my friend?"

"I did, lady," replied Andrew, in the same tone. "For in serving you I do not serve Sir Mortimer Du Vane?"

"Sir Mortimer Du Vane? I do not know anyone so named. I do know Sir Mortimer Clair."

"The names belong to the same, lady, though I did not know that Sir Mortimer Clair, whose dagger was at my throat on Shingly Green, was the famous Du Vane until to-night, when it somehow got abroad that he who beat us so badly on the green, was that warrior of France, Burgundy, and Flanders."

Lauretta had heard of that soldier, Du Vane, too, for the ballads of the day were full of his deeds, true or exaggerated, and her heart bounded with pride as she thought that so famous a knight was her betrothed.

"He loves me, honest soldier, and I love him," she said, with a frank sweetness which made old Andrew Tarl glow with kindness and fresh resolve to be a faithful friend to her, at any risk. "We are betrothed, and I hate Sir Simon. Will you aid me to escape?"

"I will, lady, if I die for it; but not now."

"Thanks, and may heaven bless you! Why am I brought here?"

"That I know not, but will try to learn—"

"Oh, first try to inform Sir Mortimer that I am here, for he can free me if anyone can."

"I fear he will find much more difficulty than you

imagine, lady," replied Andrew, shaking his head. "Earl Roger is moving in this mysterious matter, and he is no weak foe for anyone. Keep a good heart, though, lady, and with the help of heaven, old Andrew Tarl will set you free. But here we are at the private door of the palace."

"Why do we see no persons moving about?" asked Lauretta.

"It is late; and if it were not, the earl does not permit the private entrances of his palace to be closely watched."

Lauretta felt that the old soldier meant more than his words expressed, but she had no time to make farther inquiry, as Sir Simon came up, saying:

"Your scruples must yield, lady; and you must take my arm, or I shall take yours, as we are about to enter the palace."

"You may lead me, sir, for I will not consent even to appear to lean upon your arm," replied Lauretta, shrinking in disgust from him.

"This is delightful encouragement for my wooing," laughed Sir Simon. "If you treat my advances thus harshly before we are wedded, my faith! how will it be after?"

"We wedded!" replied Lauretta, indignantly. "Sir Simon Vagram, two have to consent to make a marriage, and you may be very sure that I will never be your wife."

He scoffed and laughed, for he had resolved that she should be his, whether priest blessed or not. Yet he had not agreed to make her his wife, for his idea of marriage was, that husbands were slaves and wives tyrants; his mother having often bearded even Roger Vagram in her day.

Still, the knight began to regard Lauretta with deeper interest; and although his heart was fired with passion from the moment he had first seen her, that passion was rapidly increasing to a frenzy of love, and he felt that it might be possible that even Simon Vagram could sacrifice his life to call this glorious maiden his own.

"But I marry no nameless flower girl," he resolved, as he grasped Lauretta's arm and led her into the palace. "If she be noble by birth, and recognised by her kindred, and have riches in abundance, ready for my using, why, I may say 'yes' to the priest."

Meeting the steward of the palace, he asked for the earl, and was informed that Lord Roger, with Sir Mortimer Du Vane, had gone into the east wing.

"Sir Mortimer Du Vane!" thought Lauretta, as she heard the reply. "And he is my Mortimer! Oh, heaven grant that we may meet!"

Her agitation attracted the attention of Sir Simon, and he remarked it, not knowing that Du Vane was Clair, though that Clair was the name of the man who had disarmed him he was aware:

"You seem surprised. Do you know Sir Mortimer Du Vane?"

Lauretta replied, quickly:

"I know no one by that name."

"It is the name of the knight whom your worship encountered in Shingly Green," said the steward.

"What! The lover in black velvet?" exclaimed Sir Simon. "Guard you the lady, steward, while I hasten to the earl. Come with me, Andrew Tarl. I thought the lover's name was Clair."

Andrew followed reluctantly, though he was much surprised to learn that Sir Mortimer was in the palace, and somewhat alarmed.

"There is rare villainy afoot," he muttered, as he shouldered his heavy partizan and followed Sir Simon. "The father has strapped the lover, while the son enamored the maiden. The east wing? My faith, that part of the palace is haunted, they say, by the spirit of a beautiful lady, clad in golden silk, and wearing gems. 'Tis rumoured, too, that there is a walled-up room; though Sir Barton, who fears neither heaven nor man, ghost nor devil, hath his quarters there."

Sir Simon, guided by the sound of hammering, soon found the earl and the sorceress at the work of securing Sir Mortimer in his prison.

"What does this mean?" demanded Sir Simon.

"The girl? Where is she?"

"In the hall of the garden entrance, my lord—"

"Then let me tell this caught fox of it," said the earl, kneeling, and uttering a taunt which the imprisoned knight rewarded with a random thrust.

"Are you badly hurt?" asked Sir Simon, as his father sprang to his feet and clapped his hand to his pierced cheek.

"No. A sharp scratch. Andrew Tarl, you have a quiet tongue in your head, see that you keep it still, or you may lose it. Place guards, say two, in this hall, with orders to inform me if they hear any unusual or suspicious noise within. Come, Sir Simon, I will to my apartment, and thither do you lead the flower girl."

"And I will go with you, my lord," said Siballe, who was now nearly sober, for she was so accus-

toned to immense draughts of strong waters that their effect soon passed off from her hardened brain.

"My lord," asked Andrew Tarl, as the earl was about to move away, "is there one imprisoned therein?"

"Fool, yes; and having placed the guards do you go and inquire after the welfare of Sir Barton Woolfort and report to me."

"Sir Barton, I heard, took an opiate, and the leech ordered him not to be disturbed until morning, nor even then, if he sleeps on, my lord."

"Sir Barton is no chicken," replied the earl. "Ten to one he is out by daylight in search of Sir Mortimer Du Vane to punish him."

"Aye, he made a vow not to speak to man or woman until he has again measured swords with Sir Mortimer," remarked the soldier.

"If he keeps his vow he will never wag his tongue again," said the sorceress, laughing mockingly, as she followed the earl.

Sir Simon, who never asked a question when he could surmise the reply, and aware from what he had heard that he who was his rival was nailed up to starve and die, and rejoicing in the belief, hastened to return to the unfortunate Lauretta.

The earl and Siballe proceeded to that apartment of the palace in which the latter had sunken into a drunken sleep.

Andrew Tarl, who feared to excite suspicion, hastened to select two guards to act as sentinels in the hall, muttering:

"So the brave young knight has fallen into a snare. Ah, the cowards! They dared not fall upon him openly, and have betrayed him to torture him to death. Now it shall go ill with old Andrew Tarl if he does not aid Sir Mortimer to escape. Not to-night or I may fail. I would I had more wit, I would soon hit upon a plan. But 'tis said 'where there's a will there's a way,' though heaven knows I have had will enough to fill a church, and not always ways enough to fill a thimble, so there's little comfort in that."

He found two guards and had placed them, when a servitor met him, saying:

"Andrew, the earl commands that you pace the hall below, that which opens into the chamber of Sir Barton Woolfort. If the knight needs attendance see to it."

"Hol!" thought the old soldier, as he departed, "the earl is keener than his son. He suspects. Now, to-morrow Andrew Tarl will be sent into the country, for he has seen and heard a secret. Come, this is no longer a question of the rescue of the lady, nor of Sir Mortimer, but of life!"

Excited by these thoughts, he began to pace to and fro before the closed door of Sir Barton.

(To be continued.)

MAKING THE MOST OF A CORPSE.—The claims from the Manchester district upon one of the few respectable Industrial Assurance Societies in London having excited some suspicion, a gentleman from the office was sent down to make inquiries into the matter, and he has sent to the head office, as the result of such inquiry, a letter from which the following is an extract:—"I herewith send you another death claim, but I must leave you in London to say whether the person claimed for is the person dead. It would take one's whole time to look after these people in Manchester. I must tell you that one corpse will be enough to serve a whole parish, and may be taken about from cellar to cellar, or house to house, and claims made upon half-a-dozen societies. I must say I never know before how money might be and is got from assurance companies and societies, and you may rest assured that ours is not the only one in Manchester which is so fleeced. If the society is to protect itself, you must set your faces against the payment of any and all claims, unless all particulars are forthcoming, and according to the terms on which the policy or policies were granted."

FASHIONS IN 1763.—The Countess Dowager of Effingham was robbed of the robes she wore at the Coronation, and other dresses, and thus described them in an advertisement:—"Coronation robes with a silver tissue petticoat, the gold trimmings to the petticoat, and the tassels, &c., to the robe taken off, and put into papers; a scarlet-flowered damask mantua petticoat, very richly embroidered with silver; an uncut red-flowered velvet mantua petticoat, trimmed with silver flounces of net, with silver tassels; a very rich blue and silver mantua petticoat, with a figured ground; a mantua petticoat, white and gold, with figured ground; a white satin gown and petticoat; a brown satin sack, richly brocaded with silver; a new satin sack and petticoat, white satin ground, brocaded with yellow; a scarlet unwatersed abby sack and petticoat; a white tissue flowered sack and petticoat; a white and silver sack; a red satin fly petticoat, with a broad silver orrice at the

bottom; a quilted red silk petticoat; and a blue and gold Turkey silk sack and petticoat." A person whose name is not mentioned, influenced by the same cause as the countless, described clothes as follows: "A brocaded lustring sack, with a ruby-coloured ground and white tobine stripes, trimmed with floss; a black satin sack, flowered with red and white flowers, trimmed with white floss; a pink and white striped tobine sack and petticoat, trimmed with white floss; and a garnet-coloured lustring nightgown, with a tobine stripe of green and white, trimmed with floss of the same colour, and lined with straw-coloured lustring." Such was the gaudy fashions of our dames circa 1763. Are we not improved in our taste, good reader?

SCIENCE.

A SON of Sir Rowland Hill has invented and patented a machine for stamping letters. By its help as many as 218 letters can be "single-stamped" and 180 "double-stamped" in a minute.

CAPTAIN CHRISTIE, of the bark *Euphrosyne*, reports that on October 9th, in lat. 26° 36' S., long. 52° 52' E., he encountered terrific storms, and a most extraordinary condition of the sea, indicating a submarine earthquake.

THE ORIGIN OF PETROLEUM.

THIS is, then, no new thing; but whence comes it? And in answer to this question we have many theories, some of them sufficiently ludicrous. One suggests that, since the earth is a huge animal, the rocks its bones, the water circulating in them its blood, the grass and trees its hair, the hills pimples upon its face, and *Ætna* and *Vesuvius* eruptive boils, all that is necessary to obtain oil is to bore through the skin into the blubber of the monster, and oil very naturally flows from it. Another supposes that, during the time of the Flood, the great whales were buried deep under accumulations of mud, in those places where the oil most abounds; and hence petroleum is merely antediluvian whale oil. It has been suggested that, since the earth is at some period to be destroyed by fire, the oil was probably prepared against that terrible day when the match will be applied, and the world burned up.

Apart from these ludicrous explanations, however, men of science have considered this question, and rendered their verdict. Professor Silliman says that "petroleum is uniformly regarded as a product of vegetable decomposition." Professor Dana says "Petroleum is a bituminous liquid resulting from the decomposition of marine or land plants (mainly the latter), and perhaps, also, of some non-nitrogenous animal tissues." By many it is supposed to be a product of coal; and hence the name of "coal oil," so frequently applied to it. Some suppose that the coal, being subjected to the enormous pressure of the overlying beds, has yielded oil, as a linseed-cake does under an hydraulic press, and we have seen the theory advanced that the coal, heated (as it evidently has been in the coal regions of Eastern Pennsylvania), gave off oily vapours which, rising to the cold region of the upper air, condensed and subsequently fell in oily showers, making its way as best it could to the hollows of the earth's interior, where the oil borer finds it to-day.

Facts play and havoc with these various theories. If the oil comes from coal, it seems strange that it is so rarely met with in a coal district. Numerous coal mines in England, Wales, Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton may be visited and no petroleum seen therein, nor even smelt; and this is an article that never waits for an introduction, but salutes the olfactories at once. Of course, if it came from coal, coal mines would be the places in which to discover it; coal neighbourhoods should abound with it, coal miners be familiar with it; and it should never be found in rocks older than the coal measures. The contrary of all this is true. When it is found in the coal measures, it has been forced up from underlying beds in which it was originally contained.

In this country, nearly all the oil hitherto obtained has been from beds that lie below the coal measures, and sometimes at a great depth below them. On Oil Creek, in Pennsylvania, it is found by boring in shales and sandstones, sometimes to a depth of a thousand feet; these beds belong to the Chemung group of the Devonian formation, and are many hundred feet below the coal measures. At Enniskillen, in Canada West, where the oil has at one time come up in springs, and overflowed, leaving a thick bed of asphaltum, covering the ground for an acre, the limestone in which borings are made contains characteristic fossils of the Hamilton group of the Devonian formation.

But may it not have been produced from sea plants, as coal has been from land plants, as several semi-

gent geologists have supposed? The quantity of free oil existing in the earth seems to forbid this. One well produced twenty-eight thousand barrels in ten months. From three wells near Oil Creek, one thousand barrels spouted in twenty-four hours; and from one, three thousand seven hundred and forty. The "Big Phillips" Well struck oil in October, 1861, at a depth of four hundred and eighty feet. It yielded about three thousand barrels a day. The oil rushed out with such violence, that the well could not be tubed for several days; and it has been calculated that forty thousand barrels of oil were lost in the creek before it could be collected.

The "Noble" Well struck oil in April, 1863. Its daily yield was about fifteen hundred barrels, at which rate it flowed for six months.

There must be lakes of petroleum to render such flows possible. Where are the bodies of fucoids or seaweeds from which this oil could flow? These seaweeds of the Silurian and Devonian times, in whose beds the greatest quantity of petroleum is found, were so loose in structure and contained so little bituminous matter, that their impressions do not even darken the light-coloured shales in which they are found embedded. Had these plants been as oily as fish, their bodies would have left dark impressions on the shales as the bodies of fish do, and if they were not as oily as fish, or as bituminous as land plants, by what possibility could they produce lakes of oil? If the plants had, indeed, been oily, no oil could have been collected from them, unless preserved from contact with the air and water. Each plant being separated from its companions, on being buried in mud, the oil, supposing any to exist, would have been absorbed by it, and thus lost.

Has the oil been distilled from bituminous shales, as some suppose? Probably not. It requires a strong heat to distill oil from shales; and generally where petroleum is found in the greatest abundance, there is the least appearance of igneous action.

How was it procured, then? It is a coral oil, and not a coal oil. Numerous specimens of fossil coral have been obtained from Devonian and Silurian rocks, belonging to the family of favosites, or honeycomb stone, as the name means, the cells of which very much resemble those of the honeycomb; and, as the cells of the honeycomb are filled with honey, those cells are filled with oil. Oil has been found in some specimens nearly as limpid as water; and, by heating the coral, oil runs out readily.

It is, then, an animal production, and not a vegetable one. It is a product of the ocean, and not of the land; being almost invariably associated with salt water from the bottoms of seas. It is not formed from the bodies of the coral polyps, as some have supposed—for, when dry, they are a mere film, that could be blown away by a child's breath—but secreted from the impure waters, principally, though not exclusively, of the Devonian times; the coral polyps performing the same office for the water that the carboniferous plants did for the air.

THE CHAUCER WINDOW, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

A MEMORIAL of Chaucer has been set up in Poets' Corner, immediately over his tomb. The design is intended to embody his intellectual labours and his position amongst his contemporaries. At the base are the Canterbury Pilgrims, showing the setting out from London and the arrival at Canterbury. The medallions above represent Chaucer receiving a commission, with others, in 1372, from King Edward III. to the Doge of Genoa, and his reception by the latter. At the top the subjects are taken from the poem entitled "The Floure and the Leafe." On the dexter side, dressed in white, are the Lady of the Leafe, and attendants; on the sinister side is the Lady of the Floure, dressed in green. In the tracery above, the portrait of Chaucer occupies the centre, between that of Edward III. and Philippa, his wife; below them, Gower and John of Gaunt; and above are Wickliffe and Strode, his contemporaries. In the borders are disposed arms. At the base of the window is the name Geoffrey Chaucer, died A.D. 1400, and four lines selected from the poem entitled "Balade of Gode Counsaile":—

Flie fro the preece, and dwell with soth-fastnesse,
Suffre unto thy good though it be small;

That thee is sent reeveye in buxomnesse;
The wrastling for this world sceketh a fall.

This window was designed by Mr. J. G. Waller, and executed by Messrs. Thomas Baillie and George Mayer. It is a brilliant piece of colour, and an interesting addition to the attractions of the Abbey. This and the Brunel window deserve the attention of students of modern stained glass. Chaucer's tomb should now be cleared of some of the disfigurements around it.

THE temperature required for absorption of hydrogen by platinum is much below that at which the gas is again released; thus some foil absorbed 76

per cent. at 100 deg., and 145 per cent. at 280 deg. The condensed hydrogen has the properties of the nascent gas. Thus, palladium so charged reduces permanganate of potash, bleaches iodide of starch, throws down Prussian blue from ferrocyanide of potassium.

The famous salt mine of Wieliczka, ten miles from Cracow, which brings a net revenue to the Austrian Government of upwards of 6,000,000 florins (600,000L), is threatened with total destruction by a stream of water, which made its appearance while the workmen were digging in one of the lower shafts in search of potash. Thus far all efforts to drain off the water have proved ineffectual.

THE PRICE OF POULTRY AND FEATHERED GAME IN THE REIGN OF KING HENRY VIII.

THE following is a curious paper on the value of birds in the reign of Henry VIII. It will be observed that "cranes, bustards and storks" were valued at "liij. s. the pece."

"Md. yt ys agreed by Commissions that the fellowshyppe of the pulters shall s'we the Kings magesty wythe thes kynds of pultry stuffe following, on the pryce as here after apertythe:—Swanne, the pece, v. s.; cranes, bustards, storks, the pece, liij. s.; hermeswys (herons), shewerlers (spoonbills), and bytters (bitterns), the pece, xvij. d.; peockes old, the pece, ij. s.; pechykkes, the pece, xliij. d.; capons of gr [growth—grece?], of the best the pece, x.s.; capons good the pece, xliij. d.; capons, the pece, viij. d.; hennes of gr. the pece, viij. d.; browes (?) and egrets (?), the pece, xliij. d.; gulls, the pece, xliij. d.; mewes, the pece, vi. d.; grene gesses from Ester tyl Mydsomer, ye pece, vij. d.; gress gresses, from Mydsomer till shroff tyde, the pece, viij. d.; goodwytt, the pece, xliij. d.; dotterels, the dosen, liij. liij. d.; quayles, the dosen, liij. d.; sparrows, the dosen, liij. d.; pegyons, the dosen, viij. d.; rabbits socars (rabbit suckers?), the dosen, xviii. d.; bastarde plovers, the dosen, ij. s. vj. d.; marles (thrushes), the dosen, xviii. d.; henne spytts (?), xviii. d.; larks, the dosen, vj. d.; buntynge, the dosen, liij. d.; greatte byeds (?), the dosen, vi. d.; eggs from Ester to Myghelmas, xvi. d.; eggs from Myghelmas tyll Ester, xx. d."

It will be remarked that turkeys are not included. This fowl was first seen in France in the reign of Francis I., and in England in that of Henry VIII. in 1524. Yet so familiar had the turkey become even in Shakespeare's time that its then recent introduction into Spain (and thence into other European countries), from Mexico, seems to have been already forgotten; for the bard of Avon commits the remarkable anachronism in the first part of his drama of King Henry IV., act ii. scene i., of making one of his carriers exclaim, "Odsbody, the turkeys in my panner are quite starved!" In 1541, as remarked by the late Mr. Broderip, we find a constitution of Archbishop Cranmer, directing that of such large fowls as cranes, swans, and turkey-cocks there should be but one dish; and we find the bird mentioned as no great rarity at the inauguration dinner of the sergeants-at-law in 1555. Two turkeys and four turkey-chicks are mentioned, which were rated at only 4s. each, the same as pheasants, while swans and cranes were charged 10s. and capons 2s. 6d.; and turkeys had become so plentiful in 1573, that Tusser, in his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry," enumerates them among the usual Christmas fare at a farmer's table, and speaks of them as "ill-neighbours both to peason and to hops." This, I suspect, is the earliest notice of turkeys as ordinary Christmas fare. Pheasants, it would seem, are also wanting in the document above reprinted.

AN Irish paper gives currency to a rumour that Lord Stanley is about to marry the Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury, a very lovely woman, just closing her 44th year, the stepmother of Lord Cranborne when in the House of Commons, and herself the mother of four children.

DESTRUCTION OF SEA-BIRDS.—On a strip of coast eighteen miles long, near Flamborough Head, 107,250 birds were destroyed by pleasure parties in four months; 12,000 by men who shoot them for their feathers, and 79,500 young birds who died of starvation in the emptied nests. Commander Knocker, there stationed, who reports these facts, saw two boats loaded above the gunwales with dead birds, and one party of eight guns killed 1,100 birds in a week. So great is the demand for plumage to brighten ladies' dresses, that thousands of birds are killed every day, and cock pheasants are flayed before cooking. The poor sea-birds ought at least to be let alone while bringing up their young, and ultimately there must be a "close time" to the whole feathered race. Law alone can preserve them from destruction by their inferiors.



[THE MURDER AT THE "RAVEN."]

SOMETIMES SAPPHIRE
SOMETIMES PALE.

BY J. R. LITTLEPAGE.

CHAPTER IX

But the miller he could never sleep,
Till the sun began to rise,
For a feverish pain oppressed his brain,
And he feared some evil,
And dreamed of the devil,
Whenever he closed his eyes.

Old Play.

"It was not the person you think it was," said Grandfather Grey, looking slyly up into the blue, deep eyes of Oscar Arkwright, "it was a gentleman with thick red hair, long and straight, which hung down low on his coat collar, and bushy eye-brows of the same colour, meeting over his thin arched nose, and a beard and moustache, Mr. Oscar—red, sir—and thick and curly, and wildish-looking; that was the kind of head, Mr. Arkwright, sir, that I saw opposite to my young lord's, in the best sitting room at the 'Raven,' two nights before Christmas, twenty years ago."

A puzzled expression settled down upon the pale, classic face of the rector's nephew.

"You are telling falsehoods," he exclaimed, passionately.

The old man burst into a feeble chuckle. 'I thought 'twould astonish you! He warn't at all like a gentleman to look at, that person who sat playing cards with my young lord, in the best sitting room of the 'Raven Inn,' near twenty years ago; he wore a thick great-coat, albeit the room was so warm. I saw my lord's face, with a merry twinkle in his bright eyes; he was going to speak to me, but the gentleman, who was just shuffling the cards, stopped him, with an angry gesture, and he whispered, 'you'll spoil all.' I saw there was some game in hand which I was not to presume to notice, much less to mangle in. 'Have you brought all the things, Grey?' asked my young lord, carelessly, 'the great sponge, a box of violet tooth powder, and brushes, soap and eau de Cologne? Please put them down in the next room; tell them I want a cold bath in the morning, and order supper for two. What would you like?' to his friend with the red hair; he did not mention his name, mind, not his name; he only said, 'What would you like?' but I saw a look in the man's eyes, such a look—it was fear, Mr. Arkwright, if ever I saw fear in my life. The gentleman was afraid that my lord was about to mention his name. They ordered

kidneys and sweetbread done in sherry, they had supper, and afterwards, went on playing écarté far into the night. I was worn out with my day's shooting, and longed sore to get to bed, for I was not a very convivial fellow, and cared little about drinking, and joking with the merry-makers below in the bar. Bob, the boy who had gone with us to carry the game-bags, was sitting snug by the fire, near the landlord. They made him drink Christmas ale, though he was stupid, and then he fell sound asleep; but for me, I couldn't bear the noise and racket they made below. I went up into the bedroom that was intended for my lord, I lighted a great fire there myself, and spread out the dressing-gown I had bought for him, on the bed. My room led out of his. I was to sleep within call—it was singular that I should have been able, on an emergency, to combine the offices of gamekeeper with those of valet, but I had been about with my young lord a good deal—I was used to his ways, and was a favourite of his. At last, up comes Lord Henry to bed, as merry as a cricket. He tossed off his coat, got into his dressing-gown, and danced about the room, like a school-boy of fourteen. 'You've made a good fire, Grey,' he says to me, 'and you ought to feel jovial so near Christmas, and so certain of a golden tip from the Czar; he always called the old earl the Czar, in fun.' 'We'll get your great gawky favourite, Mr. Josh. into the excise, and that will be making his fortune.' Thus he rattled on; he was a free-spoken young nobleman; but I could not account then, for the strange weight I felt on my spirits that night, I could not rouse myself. At last, when my lord was in bed, smoking a cigar as he lay (which was a dangerous and pernicious habit, as the old earl used to say)—just as I turned to leave the room, 'My lord,' I says, all of a sudden, 'where does that gentleman sleep, your friend?' 'How should I know?' replied my young lord, in his free and easy style. 'I suppose he will find a room in this quaint old 'Raven,' which was once, they say, a convent; and in Queen Mary's time a nun was walled-up, with her babe, in one of these rooms—horrible old times, savage old times. I have an unaccountably dread in me to-night, Grey,' he called out, all at once, 'can it be the little supper, the fatigue? Bah! I delight in fatigue; while as for supper!—has eaten it nearly all—'

"Who?" asked Oscar, in a voice which intense curiosity rendered sharp.

"He let the name of his friend escape him, then," said the old man, with the cunning light shining in his eyes.

"But you forget that upon my knowing that name

depends your own life," said Oscar, eagerly and furiously.

Then the old man stooped and whispered a name into Oscar's ear.

The young man's eyes blazed with eagerness, his cheek blanched with excitement when he heard the name.

"Your eyes look white," said old Grey, "mind," he shook his finger at the rector's nephew; "I have no proof, but words, to bring against him now."

"Enough," said Oscar, savagely, "I will forge proof if it be wanting. I will master him by means of his own guilty fears."

All this the young man spoke in a tone which did not reach the ears of old Grey.

"And why the man was there, and what errand he had come upon," pursued Grey, "I did not think to ask. 'Shall you sleep within call, Grey,' asked my lord. 'Yes, my lord, in this room which goes out of yours, here by the fireplace.' 'That's right, for I hardly feel well.' 'Shall I mix you a draught of anything, or a glass of brandy, my lord?' I asked, but he would have nothing, and I went into my room, and dropped down, dressed as I was, upon the bed, for I was too tired to take the trouble to get off my clothes. I lay and dreamed——"

"A truce to your dreams," interrupted Oscar, "what awakened you—quick, quick?"

"A sound of anger, a noise of voices in altercation. I started up in my bed to listen. Clearly the diann-

ants were in the next room. A moment more, and I had recognised the tones of him whom I dare not name. When my master's voice sounded very faintly in my ears, uttering a frozen, though feeble cry for help, I rushed to the door which separated the two rooms. Oh, pity me, Mr. Arkwright—it was bolted on the other side. What could I do but beat against it? Another instant, and my own cries for help had gone ringing through the inn; but the words were arrested on my lips, and a voice said to me, from my lord's room, speaking through the door—'you understand, Mr. Arkwright? A voice said to me: 'Satan! and I will pay you five hundred pounds.' Mr. Oscar, I knew the voice, and Satan, standing, I must suppose, by my elbow at that cursed moment, repeated to my spirit the value of the bait—five hundred pounds! 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' In that moment, sir, the five hundred pounds seemed to me the foundation-stone of a great fortune. Why should I not, in five years' time, hold my head up with the best of the farmers hereabouts; who used to jog trot to market every Saturday, on their well-fledged rags, and put their hundred pound notes every quar-

ter into the county bank? Ah, most of those farmers, my contemporaries in age, are now sleeping soundly in St. Edmund's churchyard, with the autumn winds drifting the dead leaves wildly over their last resting-places. What profiteth it them now, Mr. Arkwright, that the county bank held some thousands of their savings, and that they ambled to market on well-fed nags, sleek-coated, sir, and handsome to look upon: and what shall it profit me," added the old man, in a half wail of terror, clinging as he spoke to the hand of Oscar, "what, I say, shall it profit me, that I bowed down to the golden image, which the tempter held before my spiritual vision? I had hardly a moment in which to make up my mind, but in that moment, sir, I lost my soul."

"Tell me what befel," asked Oscar, quickly. "what befel your lord?"

"He cried again for me," Grey, Grey,—"I heard him say, in agonised accents, 'he has stabbed me in the back, and my strength is failing me, come to my help, Grey.' 'One thousand pounds,' hissed my tempter, through the door. 'If you make no outcry, you shall have the freehold also of Fagin's Mill! Ah! how I had longed to possess that mill, Mr. Arkwright, and my tempter knew it, too. 'I was, for a moment, elated; say, it even seemed to me a cheap way of winning such great wealth. I drew in my breath with a long sigh of satisfaction. I closed my eyes. I pinched the flesh of my arm. Then I stuffed my fingers into my ears, returned to my bed, flung myself down upon it, and tried to shut out all thought save guilty triumph in my coming wealth. Then I heard a low rap on the door. 'Shout, now,' said the voice of my tempter, 'as loud as you will. You are looked in, and, therefore, no blame can attach to you. Shout,—all the house!' At once the whole horror of my crime burst upon me, like a storm brewed in Madras. My master, my dear, loving, young master. My lord, my dear young lord, what had happened to him? Could guilty Judas have felt as I felt at that moment. Fagin's Mill,—one thousand pounds—a farm—an ambulating nag—a large account at the bank. Were these the baubles, for the worth of which he lay in the next room—dead. Oh, was he dead? Sir, I was too hoarse to cry out at first; too weak, and terror-stricken. I tried, I tried; but I only succeeded in making a feeble moan, like that of a suffering child. But all at once the power came back, and I filled the quaint old 'Raven' with the most awful cry that was ever heard, they say, within the walls of human habitation. The house was roused. I heard footsteps in the next room, the next dreadful room, and I saw lights flash under the door, and then I heard the shrieks of fainting women, and the loud passionate cries of honest men, who looked upon a scene of crime and horror. 'Let me out, let me out,' I roared, beating at the door in my agony. 'What have they done to him? My Lord! my young lord! they looked me in, my lord, they looked me in, and I could not come to your help.' They unlocked the door, and I staggered in among 'em all, looking, they said, as pale as a three days' corpse, and as sunk and changed. I went to where a little crowd of men and women were collected about the prostrate form of my dear young lord. He lay on the floor, sir, in a pool of blood. He had been stabbed savagely twice in the back, and the knife of the assassin had penetrated his heart. The face, wild, amazed, despairing; the poor eyes staring, yet glazed; the slight hand, sir, strong and muscular, notwithstanding, clutching still at one of the fire irons, the only implement that fate threw in his way on that too dreadful night. Ah, I have never closed my eyes since that awful night, that I have not seen that figure, motionless, helpless, and the angry men and weeping women crowding around it. I joined my tears with theirs. 'My master! why, why did I sleep so soundly: why did I sleep before the first cowardly blow was struck?' Thus I spoke, and I knelt down by the side of the corpse in my frenzy, and called upon the voice, which was hushed for ever, to pronounce my pardon. Sir, no suspicion of complicity ever assailed me. Since that fatal night I have walked among my fellow-men, as one walks who has a right to hold his head up, and whose heart, right with God, gives him no pain when it sighs over the memories of the past. Outwardly, all of this, Mr. Arkwright, for within, within, I have suffered torments which human tongue and pen could not describe."

"I tell you, I care not for the story of your feelings; I deal not with your dreams. I am a man of the world, of the time; a man practical and earnest," said Oscar, in a tone of haughty command, which made the now cowardly old man tremble. "Tell me, in a few words as you can, what befel at the inquest; where suspicion pointed? How you came off, and whether the thousand pounds and the freehold of the mill were given to you as the price of your silence. I only wish for a narrative of facts, Mr.

Grey. Sentiment, and the more poetical parts of crime, are not, in the slightest degree, interesting to me."

The old man had again relapsed into the semi-conscious mood into which he had before fallen; for a few moments the thread of his narrative appeared to have escaped his memory.

"Suspicion," said the old man, passing his withered hand over his eyes, as if to collect his scattered thoughts. "Suspicion, sir, fell upon him with the red hair, who had played cards with my lord on the night in question. His room at the 'Raven' was found empty; he had escaped across the tiles, it was supposed, for his window was open, and my lord's great watch, set with diamonds, was gone. It was a hunting-watch, of great value, and there was a portrait of his mother, exquisitely painted in enamel, at the back. His great emerald ring was pulled from the slight forefinger of his left hand, and his pocket-book was gone, which contained some papers of value; also his red silk purse, containing twenty pound in sovereigns and half-sovereigns. You were not more than two or three years old, Mr. Arkwright, at that time, but you must have heard the outlines of this story, over, over, and over again; have you not? 'How that a mysterious man had come to the 'Raven' Inn, whom nobody knew but my young lord; how that it was suspected that he was some acquaintance, whom Lord Henry had picked up, either in foreign parts, or else on the turf, for my lord had been a gay young nobleman, in his time. It was supposed that the villain had returned to my lord, after he was asleep, and tempted him to rise and play again the game of cards; that while they were playing, my lord had risen to stir the fire, and that then the assassin had stabbed him, with a sharp stiletto, in the back. 'He had first,' said the reports of that day, 'taken the precaution to double-lock the door which communicated with the room where the faithful and long-trusted servant of the unfortunate young nobleman lay sleeping the sound sleep of fatigue, and the poor fellow was only, it appears, awakened by the last, despairing death-cry of his master.' Ah, and in truth, he had called upon me with his weak, failing voice, entreated me to come to his help, to call assistance; but nobody knew of it, sir,—nobody had the slightest idea of my guilt. The man with the red hair was searched for; acute detectives were put upon the scent; in vain, sir, in vain. The most satanic cunning had plotted the whole. The watch, the pocket-book, the purse, the murderer; none were ever seen again. The old earl died of a broken heart, one year after—"

"And then?" asked Oscar, sharply.

"And then," repeated the old man, again rubbing his hand over his eyes; "then, of course, since he left no son, nor grandson, nor anybody of his name, the title dropped through; but the property went to his nearest of kin, a very distant branch, Mr. Ambrose Lamotte, a gentleman with one son, married; that son is since dead, and there remains a young lady, the greatest heiress in the three counties, and the greatest beauty, they tell me. She was not born at the time of the murder. Now she lives at the Towers with the old Squire, her grandfather, and she is to marry my Lord Beechfield."

"Is she?" replied Oscar, with a sullen smile. "Meanwhile, I am anxious to hear the conclusion of your little history. Did you, by any means, pray, find yourself in possession of one thousand pounds; and how about the ownership of Fagin's Mill? Because I believe that property is now in the possession of your amiable son, Josh?"

The old man hung his head, guiltily.

"Ask me no more questions," he muttered, at last.

Again a dark and evil smile crossed the lip of the rector's nephew.

"There is more to tell," exclaimed the old man, at length, starting up, as if in a fright, and rubbing his hand frantically over his eyes. "Bob, the widow's son, the boy who went with us, and whom I left sleeping by the fire in the bar. Well, he was never, never seen, nor heard of from that fearful night. His mother died insane, through grief, and people will tell you now, that it was the Evil One, he with the red hair, who murdered my lord, and put the lad out of sight."

"Then the Evil One gave you Fagin's Mill, Mr. Grey?" responded Oscar, with his cruel smile; "and you must have had the honour of conversing with that important personage since. I wish his majesty would give me a few things I long for."

"He is a bad master to serve," cried old Grey, rocking himself to and fro. "Have nought to do with him, Mr. Oscar."

Oscar smiled.

Shortly afterwards the rector's nephew was riding slowly across the breezy common, ruminating on the strange story he had just heard.

CHAPTER X.

Toss your proud head, sweet lady, let your eyes
Flash angry lights upon me when I sue,
Foes with disdain, or hear with cold surprise,
I dare to love, and yearn for such as you,
So sweetest lady, all kind arts display,
Lest I despairing, dream my life away.

Stowe Leigh.

EARNshaw did not presume to follow Miss Lamotte among the ruins. He wandered away in another direction, and his artistic nature stirred within him, while he looked round upon the noble relics of a past age.

"Grand old times; wild, savage, yet chivalrous and brave old times," murmured the tutor, seating himself upon a moss-grown stone, and looking at the noble Norman nave of the ruined castle chapel.

Most of the white marble pillars were entire, though the roof was gone; while nettles and creeping briars clustered about the base of each column. Side by side with the row of pillars, fronting him where he sat, was a great arch, completely clothed with ivy. Over that arch was a broken tower, within which, in the old days, the great clock had been placed. Now the aperture was left hollow and empty.

Earnshaw smiled while he looked at the arch; then drew out his book and pencil, and began to make a rapid sketch. All at once he heard light footsteps behind him, crushing down the dry leaves, and his heart gave a wild leap. Another moment, and the heiress stood before him, holding up her graceful habit in one hand, idly twirling with her gold-headed riding-whip. She looked flushed, beautiful, exultant.

"I have been looking up at Lady Ada's window," said Cathleen.

Earnshaw rose to his feet, as in duty bound, while the lady was standing.

"And did you see any trace of the hapless lady, Miss Lamotte?"

"No, I am not quite so superstitious as that; but the whole place looks so lonely this morning, and I am so delighted at your sketching powers, you will come here and make drawings for me of all these ruins when you have time, will you not?"

"With pleasure, Miss Lamotte."

"And you have begun the arch where the old clock-tower stood," said Cathleen, looking over the young man's shoulder. "Why do you laugh, Mr. Earnshaw?"

"Forgive me, mademoiselle, but your history of the scene on the Eve of All Hallows, when the knights and dames turned out with hound, hawk, and palfrey, and rode off to the wedding, is a little out of place with the booming of the great clock, which ushers in the story. I mean that I hardly think clocks were invented in those days."

Cathleen smiled, a little laughingly. Cavilled at, mocked! by this mere tutor, this gentleman beggar; she, Miss Lamotte, at whose lightest word the most gallant gentlemen in three broad counties were ready to run to the uttermost corners of the kingdom to do her bidding.

"You should not be too captious over a romantic tale, Mr. Earnshaw," she said, calmly, looking down, while she spoke, at the dead leaves at their feet. "My tale may be untrue in some particulars; indeed, I suppose I shall have to admit that all the supernatural portions of it are untrue; but the tradition of the secret marriage, the murdered infant, and the unhappy suicide, are all well attested in the chronicles of our house."

"A thousand pardons if I have transgressed," said Earnshaw, eagerly, for there was something in the lady's tone which pained the young man. She bowed to him slightly, but there was no shadow of a smile on her beautiful lip.

"And, now, shall we return to our horses?" said Miss Lamotte, leading the way towards where the animals were grazing.

Earnshaw at once followed her, assisted her to mount, in silence, and the two rode quietly away from the ruins. The ride home was not a very cheerful one. Miss Lamotte's pride was piqued. She was a spoiled darling of the world, and she resolved to show Earnshaw that she was not to be smiled at with impunity; riding slowly behind her, in a narrow lane, the young man argued thus with himself.

"She is as beautiful as an angel. She would make a tyrannical wife to any poor gentleman, who tried to mend his broken fortunes with her splendid one. I pity that gentleman of the future—no, I envy him—no, I would willingly be your slave, sweet Cathleen, and endure all the pain which your uncertain temper might inflict, just to have you smile brightly on me once or twice a day, as you smiled just now."

"He does not appreciate the difference in our position," said Cathleen to herself. "He imagines that

the mere fact of his having intellect and culture, must place him on an equality with me. I must teach him the difference; or else, perhaps, I shall have him presuming to make me a declaration, as that impertinent music master, the Italian count, as he styled himself, did, two years ago, in London. But he was, certainly, a simpleton, and an adventurer, and not good-looking—but still this young man is too self-possessed for his position. With what an air he rides, how masterly are his sketches! and he is gifted, intellectual, and certainly handsome, but with it all Mr. Earnshaw must be taught humility."

So the two rode back to the Towers somewhat silently. When they arrived there, the heiress dismounted, and retired to her own apartments. A servant conducted Earnshaw to the suite of rooms he was in future to occupy.

There was a pleasant sleeping chamber, a small study, and a larger room, well-furnished. This room looked into the flower-garden. It was furnished with seats and sofas, covered with a beautiful chintz; there was a handsome book-case, well-stored with books, ancient and modern.

"This is to be your room, sir. You will share it with Mr. Arkwright."

"Who?" asked Earnshaw.

"The new land-steward, sir; the rector's nephew, quite a gentleman; he will act as secretary to the squire; and the squire thought this large room would be pleasant for you both, of an evening."

"Oh!" said Earnshaw, coldly.

He felt a pang of humiliation in being told to take up his abode in one portion of the mansion, and in company with another man.

"Poor Gollon," he said to himself, with a sad laugh, "how little he knew of the world, in sending me here to win the heiress, as he thought; as if I would—!" he added, passionately, and he began to pace the length of the room with impatient strides, while he spoke. "No, if she loved me with her whole heart, I would not be so mean, poor as I am, as to take advantage of her love. But she would no more entertain such a notion in regard to myself. She—"

He continued to pace the room, until the red autumn sun was sinking fast, behind a clump of trees that crowned a hill, which fronted the window of his room.

Presently he perceived a tall, graceful form, robed in a dress of crimson velvet, walking down the broad gravel path, towards a bush of late-blowing white roses, which clambered against the side of a quaint summer-house, built under the immensely high wall of the garden. There was no mistaking the queenly grace of the young heiress. Cathleen had enveloped her shoulders with a rich shawl of black lace; her raven hair was without ornament, and she was about to twine among its wealth one pure white flower. Soon she had selected a rose; and, as she again walked down the gravel path, was Earnshaw too vain in imagining that Miss Lamotte condescended to turn her bright eyes towards the window where he stood? Another moment, and she had walked away, stately as a queen, indifferent as the very trees and bushes which swayed about carelessly in the wind. He watched her out of sight; watched the sweep of the flowing velvet robe, the folds of the lace shawl, the elevation of the small superb head. "How proud she is!" said Earnshaw to himself. "The whole haughtiness of her race seems to be concentrated in this one girl. How shocked she would be did she know of poor Gollon's romancing regarding her. And yet she can flirt; she is not above dealing out bright smiles and gentle words, calculated to inflame the fancy, and wound the heart of any susceptible unfortunate who is thrown into the witchery of her presence. I hope this pupil of mine will come home soon with his aunt, Mrs. Lamotte, so that I may have plenty to employ my time; and I must study and sketch. Oh! there are numbers of ways in which a sensible man may better employ himself than in following with his eyes and thoughts the velvet train and raven tresses of Miss Cathleen Lamotte." At this moment the door opened, and a servant appeared carrying a tray with a covered dish. It was the dinner of the tutor, served to him in his own apartment. The man put down the tray and took off the covers, there was a simple dinner, delicately cooked. He placed wine on the table, stirred the fire, and asked Earnshaw, as the dusk was falling, whether he should close the shutters, and bring a lamp. Earnshaw agreed. The footman brought a bunch of grapes from the hothouse, and another kind of wine. He was left alone afterwards, with his chair drawn close to the fireplace, a lamp burning, a heap of books on the table, his pen, pencils, sketching and writing materials close to his hand, the chintz curtains drawn before the windows. The young man sat down and tried to study, but between his eyes and the pages descriptive of me-

dieval architecture, which he was attempting to study, there came ever and anon the bright dark eyes of Cathleen, half tender, half mocking, wholly fascinating and absorbing to the exclusion of every other thought. He threw down the book and began to pace the room, laughing at his own folly, meanwhile.

"This foolish dream will pass," murmured the young man. "I find myself, for the first time, dwelling upon poor Gollon's dreams of my rights to great wealth and name. I am longing to find the lost tin box that contains the proof of my birth. I am giving up my mind to the hopes of winning Miss Lamotte some day. What an empty vision! What a baseless fabric, what a castle in the air! 'Life is real, life is earnest,' as Longfellow taught me when I was only a boy. Ah, but I fear one learns maxims in boyhood which it is difficult to put into practice in manhood. Difficult, yes, but without difficulty there would be no merit in overcoming temptation; and I must even learn to struggle with, and overcome this most weak and foolish fancy, for one of the proudest and most pitiless heiresses in England. I, a tutor, with one hundred a year, held at the pleasure of her grandfather; an utterly nameless man, with nothing to recommend me, save my brains and my honesty. I will avoid the drawing-rooms and the flower gardens in future—every place where it will be in the least likely that I shall meet with Miss Lamotte. I shall, of course, go shooting and fishing with my pupil. I shall have much exercise and employment, one way and another, and if all this does not answer, why I can but go at last."

While Earnshaw thus talked with himself, the footman opened the door. Mr. Lamotte and Miss Lamotte had dined and were in the drawing-room. Would Mr. Earnshaw favour them with his society, since they were quite alone. Earnshaw sent his compliments, and instead of acting upon the resolution he had just formed of avoiding the presence of Cathleen, he went into his room, put a few finishing touches to his toilette, and then went to the drawing-room, where the master of the mansion and the heiress awaited his coming. The room was most princely, most magnificent; the ceiling in golden medallions, was painted with scenes from Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," mirrors and priceless objects of *verre*, embellished the walls; the hangings and couches were of rich blue figured silk. The stately, handsome Lamotte stood before the blazing fire. He wore buckles in his shoes; jewels blazed at his throat and on his hands, his thin hard mouth was closely shut, his stern eyes, dark and piercing, were bent upon Earnshaw with a look of scrutiny. This was the young man's first introduction to the rich squire.

"Good evening," said Lamotte, with a slight bow.

"What a strong, sinewy old man he is," mused Earnshaw. "I have always heard that he was as active and forward in the hunting-field as the best of them."

"Pray be seated," said the squire, in his cold, gracious tones.

Cathleen stood by the fire-place, radiant as a goddess of mythology. She had twined the one white rose in her dark hair; her white arms were bare; she wore rich golden bracelets. The bodice of her crimson velvet dress was cut square; one diamond blazed at her white throat. It was a splendid locket, hanging from a slight gold chain.

"We sent for you, Mr. Earnshaw," she said, with one of her smiles, half malicious, half kind. "We sent because grandpapa and I were beginning to quarrel. We always do when alone, and we thought you would prevent anything unpleasant, and compel us to keep our tempers."

The proud squire frowned.

"When I was young," he said, "young ladies acted like young ladies; did not address every strange gentleman as they would a brother or an old friend. Times are changed, Miss Cathleen."

Cathleen, seating herself upon a couch, and looking up, with a mocking smile, at Earnshaw, said: "Thank the powers I was not one of your straight-laced people, when you were young, my good grandpapa. Not one of your pretended prudes, who was afraid to speak to a gentleman, unless her mother was close by her side. We have numbers of those prim creatures in our picture-gallery, Mr. Earnshaw. You may see them, holding roses in their hands, and simpering like simpletons. Mr. Lamotte wishes to see me out upon that pattern, and simpering in that style."

She opened the magnificent piano, as she spoke, and ran through some opera airs with exquisite taste and feeling; Earnshaw listening to her, with bent head.

"You play *ecarté*, I presume?" said Mr. Lamotte, speaking, with an icy hauteur, to the tutor.

Earnshaw awakened from his dream with a start,

and sat down to the game with a courteous humility, which rather pleased Mr. Lamotte.

Just as the squire had won the first game, for Earnshaw's thoughts did not permit him to pay much attention to the cards, a footman entered, and announced that one of the tenants had come on especial business to see the squire.

"Show him into the library," said Mr. Lamotte, rising, as he spoke, and walking towards the door.

When the heiress found herself alone with the tutor, she sprang up from her seat, and came and stood close to where Earnshaw sat. The young man rose also. He did not trust himself to look at the heiress, but he felt the light of her brilliant eyes upon his brow. He loved Cathleen Lamotte already, he had made her the idol of his fancy, and the dream of his life, but he did not blind himself to the faults of the high-spirited, self-willed, though generous creature.

"Was I not quite right, Mr. Earnshaw?"

"My opinion is of no value, Miss Lamotte," said Percy. "You do what seems right in your own eyes, and nobody has a right to question you."

Cathleen's sweet face grew pale with surprise, and perhaps with annoyance.

"We have an advantage, Mr. Earnshaw," she said, in a tone of scorn, "in the possession of a moralist capacious as yourself. I shall find myself taken to task, I suppose, whenever I am selfish, impatient, or—or irreverent. Will it be so?"

She asked the question in a tone accentuated almost sharply. Earnshaw was silent for a moment; his heart beat painfully. Were he and Cathleen always to quarrel; always to exchange reproach, anger, and contempt? How hard it seemed.

"I have no right to find fault with Miss Lamotte," said the tutor.

"No; but you think I was selfish and odious towards grandpapa."

"Oh, not odious, Miss Lamotte!" exclaimed the young man, in a tone that was impassioned in spite of himself.

"Selfish, then, selfish—speak, was I selfish?" Earnshaw looked up at the proud, beautiful pale face, and yet he had the courage to speak truth.

"I think you were unkind."

Cathleen nodded her head and smiled bitterly. "I knew you thought it," she said. "I saw it at the time."

"Miss Lamotte, you asked me——" began the young man.

"I know, I know; and now, once for all, let me tell you something, Mr. Earnshaw. Can you bear to hear the truth?"

"What is coming now?" thought poor Earnshaw. "What a rage she is in, and how beautiful she looks, and what a hopeless idiot she is making of me. What is she going to say I wonder?"

(To be continued.)

NUMBER OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN.—The number of languages spoken is 3,064. The number of men is about equal to the number of women. The average of human life is 33 years. One-quarter die before the age of 7. One-half before the age of 17. To every 1,000 persons, one only reaches 100 years. To every 100, only 9 reach 65 years; and not more than 1 in 500 reaches the age of 80 years. There are on earth 1,000,000,000 of inhabitants. Of these, 33,333,333 die every year; 7780 every hour, and 60 every minute—or 1 for every second. These losses are about balanced by an equal number of births.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S GARDENS.—The collection of living reptiles belonging to the Zoological Society of London has just received a remarkable addition in the shape of one of the rarest of known species of lizards, one which, indeed, until lately, was supposed to be quite extinct. This is a specimen of the Tuatera lizard of New Zealand (*Hatteria punctata*), which has lately formed the subject of a valuable communication by Dr. A. Günther to the Transactions of the Royal Society. This little animal, although externally not very remarkable in appearance, possesses a very extraordinary internal structure, which necessitates its separation from every other living species of the Saurian class, and renders it more nearly allied to the extinct form called by Professor Huxley *Hypero-dapedon* than to any lizard now in existence. For this valuable acquisition the Society have to thank Sir George Grey, K.C.B., who brought it home with him on his recent return to England from New Zealand.

THE ROYAL MAUSOLEUM.—The magnificent tomb-house known as the Royal Mausoleum, and which is situated within the enclosed private grounds of Frogmore House, the residence of their Royal Highnesses Prince and Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, in Windsor Park, having been nearly completed, arrangements were made for the removal of the re-

main of the Prince Consort from the temporary tomb in which they were first deposited within the mausoleum to the granite sarcophagus in the central chamber beneath the dome. For nearly six years architects, sculptors, painters, and decorators have been busily engaged upon this splendid mausoleum, upon which all that is beautiful in the arts has been lavished. The foundation stone of the Royal Mausoleum, at Frogmore, was laid by Her Majesty on the 15th of March, 1862, and upon the 17th of December in that year, the building was consecrated by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Oxford, in the presence of the Queen and royal family; the remains of the Prince being removed on the following day from St. George's Chapel to the new tomb. In the interior is a central octagonal chamber, 30 ft. in diameter, and 65 ft. high. The walls are adorned with coloured marbles and paintings, and in the middle of the central chamber has been placed the granite sarcophagus. To this massive, yet simple tomb, the coffin of the Prince Consort was removed, under the supervision of Mr. Humbert, the architect, and Mr. Dines, the contractor for the mausoleum. The lid of the sarcophagus is adorned with a recumbent figure in marble of his Royal Highness—a work which, it is understood, was entrusted to Baron Marochetti. The granite sarcophagus is highly polished, and within it there is said to be room enough for another coffin.

SIR ALVICK.

CHAPTER LVIII.

So the time passed on; Jarles, Wharle and Varly waiting impatiently for the appearance of their accomplice Chaffton, and Jarles and Wharle expecting every moment to hear an uproar, to be caused by the discovery of the body of Lord Morton; and Lord Morton eager for the return of Captain Saybyrd, before he should come out boldly and protect Lady Aspa, as he was able and longing to do; and Sir Alvick, half mad with rage, lying upon a couch in his library, wondering how all this was to end, and plotting how to strike his triumphant enemies when they should least expect it—wondering, too, if Evaline Ulster and Hugh De Lisle had fled together, for he had learned of Hugh De Lisle's escape from the gamekeeper's cottage; and Lady Aspa, trembling but hopeful, for he whom she loved so well had promised to defeat her enemies, and take her to his bosom again as his beloved and respected wife, and had promised another thing of which the reader shall be informed presently.

Thus it was with our chief characters in Ulster Manor, when the sound of trumpets and the tramp of horse before the baronet's residence announced the unexpected arrival of the Queen of England, who had paused in her tour to pay a visit to famous Sir Alvick Ulster, who had been one of the victors of those great battles against the French.

Sir Alvick just then would rather the good-natured old queen had been anywhere than at Ulster Manor, while his mind was thus torn and racked with shame, fear and disgrace; but assuming as well as he could his old and habitual stateliness, he greeted the queen, and her attendant lords and ladies, with the best grace he could command, as did Lady Matilda also, though her head and heart were like to burst with agony.

It was during the formal interchange of royal courtesies in the great reception-room of the mansion that Mr. Wharle informed the startled baronet that he desired to be forthwith presented to the queen as his newly-discovered son and heir.

"Great heavens!" whispered the baronet, in terrible consternation, "it is not possible that your insolence sears so high."

"My insolence, indeed," replied Mr. Wharle, fiercely; and he could appear as fierce as any snake seething with pent-up venom dripping from its fangs. "My insolence, indeed! My own lawful rights, and I mean to maintain them, to urge them, to press them on every and all occasions. Present me to the queen as your newly-discovered son and heir, or I will lay the whole case before her majesty."

Sir Alvick knew very well that Mr. Wharle's impudence would not shrink from making his threat good, even in the presence of royalty itself, and swallowing his rage, he consented, and bade Mr. Wharle follow him.

The queen was seated at one end of the spacious apartment, surrounded by her lords and ladies in waiting at the moment, and Sir Alvick, followed closely by Mr. Wharle, advanced, cursing the folly and crime of his youth, which had placed him, for the time, at the mercy of unscrupulous villains, who could hang him if they wished.

"What is it, Sir Alvick?" asked the queen, graciously.

"Your gracious majesty, permit me to present to your royal notice this gentleman, who, though hitherto known only by the name of Hassan Wharle, I have but recently learned to be—"

"To be what, Sir Alvick?" asked the queen, kindly, and in no little surprise, for the miserable baronet hesitated—his tongue seemed frozen in his mouth—and his face became ashy pale.

"His lawful, legitimate son and heir, may it please your royal highness," quickly put in Mr. Wharle, in great alarm lest the unhappy baronet should faint with shame and rage. "As Sir Alvick remarked, he has very recently discovered that I am his legitimate son and heir—heir of the baronetcy of Ulster after Sir Alvick, your grace;" and here Mr. Wharle made a series of serpent-like contortions and eel-like writhings, which he supposed to be one of the most graceful salutations of a subject to his sovereign that the royal Stuart line had ever beheld.

"Can this be true, Sir Alvick!" exclaimed the amazed queen, with great difficulty restraining her laughter and contempt.

"It is false!" thundered the powerful voice of someone who at that moment advanced towards the queen; and as Mr. Wharle turned, he recognised Lord Henry Ascham, Earl of Morton, who was arm-in-arm with Captain Frank Saybyrd and Hugh De Lisle.

To explain the sudden appearance of these three, it is only necessary to state that the two latter had entered the mansion unobserved, and had hastened to Lord Morton's room, whom they found very impatiently awaiting Captain Saybyrd.

While Hugh De Lisle attired himself in a court-suit of Captain Saybyrd's, the admiral informed him of the events of the past night in a few brief words—of the meeting with Lady Aspa, whom Captain Saybyrd knew very well by the name and title of Lady Constance Morton, and also told him that which is yet unknown, though perhaps not unsuspected, by the reader.

As soon as Hugh De Lisle had clothed himself, Lord Morton said:

"Now let us into the presence of the queen. I do not fear to say that which I shall say, and if ever thereafter any lord or noble of them all dare utter scandal concerning the woman I love, by heavens I'll kill him. No fear but that I shall make it all right, my lady."

They left the room, and on their way to the presence of Queen Anne, Lord Morton, meeting the two Sturleys and Ben Caton, and supposing them to be servants of the house, he bade them drag Ross Chaffton from the closet and have him forthwith before her majesty.

"I care nothing for the form and etiquette of court in this case," remarked the sailor nobleman, hurrying on into the grand saloon, into which he entered just in time to hear the shrill voice of Mr. Wharle pressing his false claims.

On recognising Lord Morton Mr. Wharle trembled as if smitten with an ague, and in truth he was smitten with an ague of fear. He quivered, grew ghastly pale, his teeth chattered, and he gasped very much like a skinned eel writhing in the agonies of death.

"See that no one leaves the queenly presence," cried Lord Morton, in a commanding voice, as his quick eye flashed around him; and as he was well-known by all, the guards at the various entrances made ready to obey him, as they knew him to be a favoured naval chieftain.

"Let no one depart from our presence," said Queen Anne, who saw that Lord Morton was come about some weighty matter. "And now, my lord, what does this all mean?"

"It means, your grace," replied the earl, as he fixed his eyes upon Hassan Wharle, "that this lean sword-scarb of an attorney, Hassan Wharle, by name, is the greatest villain unchanged in all England, his accomplices excepted. He is not the legitimate son of this miserable baronet. This gentleman who has been my adopted son for many a year, as is known to all, Captain Frank Saybyrd, is indeed the legitimate son of Sir Alvick Ulster and a lady lawfully wedded to him, Aspa Jarles by name, the unfortunate aunt of this contemptible pettifogging rogue and would-be assassin. Sir Alvick dare you deny that you were lawfully wedded to Aspa Jarles? Speak, man, if shame and confusion have not smitten you dumb."

"Great heaven," thought the baronet, while he longed for the earth to yawn and swallow him. "My crime is already known to a noble! If Lord Morton knows it all will hear of it. I am lost!"

"Speak man," thundered the indignant earl, who felt his blood boil in his veins as he gazed upon the heartless villain, who had made the life of the woman he loved a secret, gnawing agony. "Were you not lawfully married to Aspa Jarles?"

"I was," gasped the baronet, "but when I wedded Lady Matilda, I thought my first wife was dead."

With this lie upon his white lips the guilty baronet uttered a deep groan and fell down as if dead. He had fairly swooned from shame and terror.

While Sir Alvick was being cared for by those around, Lord Morton continued:

"It is many years ago, your grace, when Captain Saybyrd was but a young lad, since I rescued him from the waves, as he clung to a spar. I loved the boy; who said he had neither father nor mother, but gave his name as Horace Stanley. I adopted him as my son, but gave him the name he bears, Frank Saybyrd, in memory of a beloved friend of mine who was dead, and he has been with me ever since, and risen to be an esteemed captain in the naval service of your majesty. Last night, I discovered that his mother was well known to me, and that she had known him to be her son ever since she met him at Morton Hall and heard his history. For certain reasons, which need not be spoken now, his mother has kept her secret in her own heart until she revealed it to me last night. But of those things perhaps, it were best to speak more privately towards respect for a noble and most foully deceived lady. Here on my left, your grace, is Sir Hugh De Lisle, whom your majesty has just pardoned for a crime of which he is as innocent as I am, and withal he has strong claims to be acknowledged as the lawful Marquis of Galmount, which title a certain popinjay called Lord Peter now disgraces—I would he were present, that I might tell him so," added the earl, as he turned his flashing eyes about him.

Queen Anne graciously saluted Sir Hugh De Lisle, and, prompted by Lord Morton, placed Hassan Wharle under severe arrest, which meant irons and a dungeon, until further investigation could be made of the charges brought against him.

Old Jarles, vigilantly keeping guard over the unfortunate Lady Aspa, but quite contented, as he had left all progressing finely for the success of his audacious plot, and had an abundance of provisions and wine furnished him, was eating and drinking in his apartment, and wondering why "laddie Hassie" did not appear, when the door was forced open.

He sprang up in great dismay as Lord Morton, Hugh De Lisle, Captain Saybyrd and others rushed in and arrested him. Nor made he the slightest resistance as he was placed in irons, only whining in a piteous voice:

"Have mercy upon a virtuous old man, and tell him of the welfare of his laddie Hassie."

"He is in irons, you old shameless villain," cried Lord Morton, as he embraced Lady Aspa, who had, on seeing him, thrown herself into his arms. "And now, my dear Frank," he added, addressing Captain Saybyrd, "behold and embrace your mother, nor heed the guise in which she is, for her vile enemies forced it upon her."

"My son, my dear son!" exclaimed Lady Aspa, as she threw her arms around the neck of the noble young officer, and drew his head to her bosom, "oh, for how many long years has my heart yearned to thus embrace you, my son, my dear son! and I dared not, lest you and others might call me infamous."

CHAPTER LIX.

CAPTAIN SAYBYRD cordially returned the loving embrace of his newly-found mother. The reader will remember that Hugh De Lisle has told that he and his playmate, Horace Stanley, were both shipwrecked, and that he supposed Horace Stanley was drowned.

Such was not the fact, as Horace Stanley, the son of Alvick Ulster and Aspa Jarles, after clinging to a spar for two days and being tossed by the waves, was rescued by Lord Morton, who was then simple Captain Henry Ascham, of the royal navy. Lord Morton, being told that the boy was an orphan, ignorant of his parentage, had changed his name and adopted him as his son.

This occurred but a few years before Lord Morton married Aspa Jarles, who had also assumed another name; and as she had never lost knowledge of the whereabouts of her son Horace, until he had embarked with Langville for France, she recognised him when she met him at Morton Hall, on being told by Lord Morton of his history. Yet she had not dared to permit the secret to escape from her lips; and in order to keep vigilant guard over her heart, had been forced to treat the youth with feigned coolness.

Her joy, therefore, on being at liberty to display her long pent-up affection for her first-born was boundless, as was that of Captain Saybyrd also.

Lord Morton having hinted the truth to Queen Anne, she had commanded suitable garments and attendance to be prepared immediately for Lady

Aspa, and Lord Morton conducted her from the room in which she had been a prisoner to another apartment, where she was received by the queen and a few discreet ladies.

Lord Morton then returned to the saloon, in search of the baronet. But he was dying, the shock having been too great when added to the fearful excitement which had racked his mind, from the instant his eyes had met those of Hugh De Lisle when the latter surprised him in his study, as we related in the first portion of this story.

Upon his death-bed the miserable Alvic Ulster made a full confession of all his crimes, and having learned the history of Captain Frank Saybyrd, sent for him; and placing his hand upon the head of the young officer, as the latter knelt at his bedside, said solemnly:

"In the presence of all these persons assembled, and knowing that I am soon to meet my offended God, I do declare this young man to be my legitimate son and heir, born in lawful wedlock between Aspa Jarles and myself. And pray that he may never despise my memory, and that his injured mother may forgive me."

The parchment of Lord Hayward was placed in his hands; he summoned strength and resolution to read it; and having done so, and heard the history of Hugh De Lisle, he solemnly declared that he believed him to be the son and heir of the murdered marquis. Then having made a second confession of his fearful misdeeds, he closed his eyes and asked to be permitted to die in peace.

His evil and perturbed spirit passed from earth before the sun went down, taking its eternal flight with a dismal groan, which appalled all who heard it.

Lady Matilda did not hear the dying groan of Sir Alvic; for, from the moment that the guilty baronet had begun to confess his crimes, she had shut herself up in her most secluded apartment, where she remained until it was necessary that she should be informed of the death of the baronet.

Those sent to inform her being unable to elicit any reply from her, forced the door of her apartment, where their eyes beheld a ghastly sight.

Lady Matilda—pale, cold, dead—lay upon the floor, a suicide; as was proved by the dagger she had plunged into her heart, and upon the ivory hilt of which her fierce hand gripped firmly.

It was thought a terrible coincidence by all, that her body should have been found just as that of her deceived and murdered husband's was found twenty-three years before, stabbed through the heart, the dagger's point in her heart, and her death-frozen fingers clutching the dagger's hilt.

Hark Varly had fled hastily and escaped arrest; nor was his after-fate known for many years, when it was discovered from the dying confession of Olin Cline, who died in extreme old age, that Hark Varly had been slain by him in France. With relentless hate Olin Cline had pursued the injurer of his daughter, until his vengeance was satisfied by a dagger's thrust through the heart of Hark Varly, while the latter slumbered in his tent.

In due course of time Lady Aspa was again publicly married to Lord Morton, and they spent the remainder of their lives in unbroken and ever-increasing happiness, living to an old age in the lovely seclusion of Morton Hall.

Captain Frank Saybyrd was speedily established as lawful baronet of Ulster, under the name and title of Sir Horace Stanley Ulster, and marrying happily, was beloved and esteemed as old Sir Malcolm had been in his prime, ere the dark spirit of Alvic Ulster disturbed his peace.

Hugh De Lisle, aided by the favour of Queen Anne, was soon established in Osborn Castle as Lord Edward Charles, Marquis of Galmount, where he dwelt for many years as the happy husband of Evaline Ulster. Before their marriage she led him to the turret-chamber, and producing the manuscript of Sir Malcolm, read it aloud.

We need not weary the reader with the contents of this long-concealed manuscript as they spoke of much already told; of Sir Malcolm's belief that Alvic Ulster had slain the marquis; of his fear of public opinion and disgraceful conviction; of his great remorse; of the terrible power wielded over him by Alvic Ulster and Lady Matilda, and of much which our readers must have imagined. Sir Malcolm's lost will, which was with the manuscript, made Evaline sole and untrammelled heiress of all his testamentary wealth, and free to choose her husband as she pleased, and revoked all other wills made by him.

Simon and James Sturley, the former obstinately clinging to his name of John Roffton, and all who had befriended Hugh De Lisle and Evaline, lived and died, well cared for and esteemed in the household of the grateful and generous Marquis of Galmount, though old Ben Caton finally died, as his father had

before him, in the great porter's chair of Ulster Manor.

Both Clement and Harrison were driven away in disgrace, as they richly deserved. Amos Jarles was not hanged, as he certainly deserved to be, the influence of his daughter, who could not forget that he was her father, deeply as he had wronged her, obtaining a royal pardon for him and his evil daughter, Clementia, upon the condition that they quitted England for ever.

They died in Holland, in great poverty and misery, and old Jarles' last words were:

"Pity I wasn't hanged with laddie Hassie, you know, for then I'd had plenty to eat and drink until the rope ruined my appetite, eh? Virtue is never rewarded in this world, you see," adding as his mind wandered and his spirit fled, "another slice of that cold ham, Hassie!"

Ross Chaffton died in prison of fever and rage, and the sentence of death upon the gibbet was executed upon his lifeless body, which remained hanging in chains for many years as a warning to all highwaymen.

Mr. Hassan Wharrie, convicted of conspiracy, attempt to assassinate and forgery, was condemned to be hanged. The prediction of "Daddy Amos" was literally fulfilled, for "laddie Hassie" "rose above his fellow men" several feet, and all beholders did solemnly declare that his hanging was a strange sight, being only to be compared to the strangling of an eel with a cord.

Lord Peter, convinced by most stubborn facts that he was not Marquis of Galmount, left England, and went abroad, where it is supposed he simply lived and died, for he was never heard of afterwards.

THE END.

MADAME DE LAFAYETTE.

We hear a great deal now of woman's wrongs and woman's rights, and it is quite true that something may yet be done to improve her social position. But it is not by giving her a place in legislative assemblies, or by opening out to her public walks of science that woman can be benefited. Property, in whatever hands, may require to be represented, and some fitting mode of giving votes by proxy might be resorted to; our social system would be improved by a more equal division of the paternal inheritance among children of both sexes, and our idle women of fashion might advantageously exercise their active faculties in the wild field of charity public as well as private. What could not woman achieve in our prisons, our hospitals, and asylums of all descriptions for every stage of suffering humanity, if only her efforts were well organized, well directed, and well combined! What a vast range of productive labour would be opened thus for the restless, discontented feminine spirits that swarm in our day. Want of occupation is their evil, and so we are overwhelmed with fast ladies of all ages and classes.

Numbers of women, for divers reasons, cannot or do not marry; an increasing legion of educated women require to find remunerative employment. Something must be done to meet new circumstances. Still, kind heaven! defend us from petticoat politicians, lawyers, doctors, &c.; let those obliged to toil keep to education, to letters, or art, as may be. For ourselves, except where gentle charity invites, or stern necessity compels, we confess to a preference for woman in the domestic sphere, in her old-fashioned character of daughter, wife, and mother. . . . Adrienne received careful religious and moral training from her mother, who called in the aid of a judicious governess and different masters. But Madam d'Ayen always reserved to herself the right maternal duty of moulding her children's hearts; indeed, she chiefly directed their studies also, for they read with her, and it was her pleasant task to guide their opening taste.

The discipline of soul and heart certainly left nothing to desire, but the instruction given to the mind does not seem to have embraced any very comprehensive range. In Adrienne's case, as she married when a mere child, that was scarcely possible. Among books of profane learning, we only find Rollin, Cornelle, Racine, and Voltaire named; she made extracts from history, and read with her mother passages of poetry and eloquence, both ancient and modern. One very French trait was Madame d'Ayen's custom of making her daughters dictate letters before they were actually able to write. The Bible and catechisms formed an every-day study. So well were truth and virtue instilled, that it required long years of experience in the world ere the sisters could really believe in the actual existence of deceit and vice. A habit deserving of note in this wise mother is, that as her girls grew up, she had the humility to draw their attention to her own defects, pointing out by what means she tried to overcome

them, and the detriment caused to her character by remaining imperfections. With strange unworidliness she refused M. de Lafayette when he was first spoken of for Adrienne, because she thought he had too large a fortune and was too early at the head of it.

Madame d'Ayen viewed the matter in a more usual way, and a long estrangement between them was the result of their different opinions. However, Madame d'Ayen could not help being won over at last by the young man's fine qualities, and the betrothment took place. After marriage, the little bride of fourteen went a good deal into society, and seems to have enjoyed it very much. It was then 1773, near the close of Louis XV.'s career, when Madame du Barry reigned, and the youthful Dauphiness, Marie Antoinette, was striving to play her difficult part amid court intrigues. A bright dawn opened before Madame de Lafayette, destined too soon to be overcast. Still, life flowed on in no unusual current until the great revolution broke out; then followed ten years of acute sufferings, that were succeeded by a tranquil period ere the tomb.—*Temple Bar.*

HEN Majesty's private band, since the deaths of the Duchess of Kent and Prince Consort, have had little official employment and no diminution of pay. After some seven years of comparative inactivity, we are glad to find these royal musicians summoned again to discourse sweet harmony in the presence of her gracious Majesty.

It may be interesting to the public to know that the one man who for some weeks has been endeavouring to clear the site for the new Law Courts has at last disappeared, and a solitary, disconsolate-looking policeman may now be seen wandering over the ruins in the Strand! Have the lawyers got the place into Chancery?

THE Duke of Abercorn has two sons and a brother in the House of Commons; the Duke of Devonshire, two sons and a son-in-law; the Marquis of Aylesbury, a brother and half-brother; the Earl of Derby, two sons; the Earl Cowper, a brother and an uncle; the Duke of Bedford, two cousins; the Earl of Lonsdale, four nephews; Lord Egerton, a son and a brother (there are also three other members of the name of Egerton, but not all of the family); the Duke of Rutland, two brothers; Lord Tredegar, a son and a brother; the Marquis of Westminster, two sons and a nephew; Earl Fitzwilliam, two sons and a brother; Lord Leonfield, two sons; and the Duke of Richmond, two brothers. There are also two members of the Sutherland family in the House.

At the recent election at one of the small boroughs, an outvoter came to the hustings riding on a donkey, the animal being covered with trappings of the Liberal colours. As he drew near he was welcomed by the cheers and applause of the supporters of the Liberal candidates, and escorted by them to the poll. But to the surprise of all who were there assembled, on being asked for whom he wished to give his vote, he said: "A plumper for the Conservative candidate." "But you have made a mistake," some one in the booth suggested; "yours are the opposite colours." "No; they are not," the voter replied; "my donkey is Liberal, but I am a Conservative."

At one of the meetings, Mr. Gischen, Liberal, made a mot. He said: "When a Conservative was twitted about Mr. Disraeli, who was called his 'great leader,' the Conservative replied, 'No, Mr. Disraeli does not belong to our eleven; he is our professional bowler.' (Laughter.) No party, whether at cricket or anything else, liked to remain 'out' very long; they wanted, of course, to have an innings. And so when the Conservatives got thoroughly tired of being kept out they put forward Mr. Disraeli as their best bowler, and he, from time to time, knocked down the Liberal wickets." (Laughter.)

A MUNICIPAL "JOB HUME."—A motion having been made at the last meeting of the Newcastle Town Council to increase the salary of the mayor from 200*l.* to 800*l.*, and to give him the house known as "Judge's Buildings," a Mr. Grogan moved the previous question. He opposed the expending of any money to be spent in eating and drinking. How many mayors and sheriffs had killed themselves by gazing? (Great laughter.) How many constitutions shattered and left like tottering rocks ready to fall? (Laughter.) He congratulated the present mayor on having almost escaped his perilous position. (Great laughter.)

A CLERGYMAN ON THE QUEEN AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT.—A few days ago a tea party was held in Christ Church school-room in connection with the Grimshaw-park Conservative Club. The Rev. Dr. Moss, vicar of Christ Church, moved a resolution to the effect that the constitutional cause was deserving of the continued support of the working classes, and

in the course of his remarks, said: "I have just been in the town on business, and happened to pass the Reform Club, and there I saw an illumination. I also saw a large stick with the words 'God save the Queen,' and another with 'Gladstone and Bright.' Well, I said, God save the Queen when she had got into such company. She requires to be saved, because I am quite sure she is in danger. I want you all to go home to-night, and pray 'God save the Queen.' And I may say God save Bright and Gladstone, because I believe they are running into much danger. I have such an affection for them that I am quite ready to say, God save John Bright and William Ewart Gladstone." (Cheers.)

FACETIE.

It is very unwise to tell one's secrets in a corn-field, since there are so many ears about.

EXTRAORDINARY FEAT OF NATURE.—Jumping from Winter to Summer without a Spring.

"SAMBO, have you seen the Catskill mountains?"

"No, Julius, but I've seen the cats kill mice."

A FRUIT MERCHANT advertises fruits to let for ornamenting grand dinner tables.

DR. JOHNSON, once speaking of a quarrelsome fellow, said, "If he had two ideas in his head, they would fall out with each other."

A PHYSICIAN boasting at a dinner that he cured his own hams, one of his guests remarked: "Doctor, I would rather be your ham than your patient."

AN INVENTOR announces a new kind of paper, which he claims to be waterproof. That would be the paper for lining milk-pails and milk-cans with.

A FAMOUS LAWYER, the leader of the western circuit of his day, used to say that the farther he went west the better he understood why it was the wise men came from the east.

A SMALL CHILD being asked by a Sunday-school teacher, "What did the Israelites do after they had crossed the Red Sea?" answered, "I don't know, ma'am; but I guess they dried themselves."

"I RESORT to wine to stimulate my wits," said a young spendthrift to an old one. "Ah," replied the veteran, "that is the way I began, but now I have to resort to my wits to get my wine."

A JURY composed of the friends of some people accused of stealing pork returned the following verdict: "We find the defendants not guilty, but we believe they hooked the pork."

By an action in the Court of Common Pleas the astounding fact is recorded that at a banquet at the new meat-market, King's Cross, 180 gentlemen, to use an American phrase, "got outside of" 521 bottles of wine.

The Royal Botanical Society has discovered a new China grass, from which ladies' dresses may be made, and beautiful ones too. Fancy the effect of a lady "Walking in the Zoo" and getting too near a grass-feeding animal. What an *exposé*!

A QUAKER said recently to a friend, in reference to the Quaker formula of marriage, "It is true I did not promise to obey when I was married; but I might as well have done so, for I had to do it."

"Why did you leave your last place?" inquired a young housekeeper about to engage a new servant. "Why, you see, ma'am," replied the applicant, "I was too good-looking, and when I opened the door folks took me for the missus."

DAMAGES have been given to a nail-maker who had been bitten by a lady's dog. In the course of the case, plaintiff was told that the dog had no teeth; to which he replied, amid general laughter, "He has precious hard gums, then."

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Times*, "Barefoot," recommends the disuse of stockings and socks, and adds, "four years ago I abandoned them, and with them have bid good-bye to the inconveniences of cold feet, corns, &c., with which I was previously tormented."

"WHAT are you beating that boy for?" asked a gentleman of a young ruffian, who was pummelling a small lad. "Kase," was the reply, "he's the feller that throwed a tater through our window and hit Isabella on the eiber as she was a playin' on the planner!"

GIVE HIM HIS DUE.—It is altogether too absurd to say that "Man is not perfect." Who is there that has not met with many who were perfect strangers, and some who were perfect rascals, and not a few who were perfect fools?

A SLY TOUCH.—A good-hearted farmer, not far off, who liked to humour his wife and himself by giving his family a good education, has his youngest son lodged at Ayr, for education at Ayr Academy. He was sitting with his spouse, *tête-à-tête*, at the fire

one evening lately. "Guidwife, the corn's unco was buiket this year; and what wi' the callant and his lodgings, and these dear academy fees, and that smashin' factor for rent, I dinna see my way clearly." "Hoot toot, guidman, ye're as fond o' the boy's learnin' as I am. It's a' we can gie them; and by-an-by ye'll see they'll maybe help us." The farmer, with a twinkle in his eye, replied, "Did ye ever see a kitten bringin' a mouse to the cat?"

A SETTLEMENT.—"When are you going to settle this bill?" "We've had a settlement already!" "When?" "The last time you called." "How so?" "Didn't I then tell you that I meant to settle the bill?" "Yes." "Very well, then; wasn't that a settle meant?"

POLICY.

A grocer in France, not long ago, subscribed towards a statue to Voltaire.

"Idiot!" said his wife, "what did you do that for?"

"Policy, my dear," said he, "policy! I've read somewhere that he's very fond of coffee, and perhaps he'll trade with us."

A CORRESPONDENT asked if the brow of a hill ever becomes wrinkled? The editor replied, "The only information we can give on that point is that we have often seen it furrowed."

A PRAECHEE, hearing the cry of an infant among his congregation, commanded that the child be removed, observing at the same time that a crying child in a place of worship was like the toothache—there was no cure but having it out.

It is common, now-a-days, to affix the words, "no cards" to marriage announcements. The reason is that the parties have "played all their cards" before marriage.

A CALCULATING WIDOW.

Paris contains within its walls a Russian colony. It is aristocratic, elegant and ultra-capricious, and we often hear stories of the noble Muscovites of the Faubourg St. Honoré. To-day we heard a good one on Mme. de—, who has a magnificent diamond necklace that cost 10,000*l*. If any one asked the great Russian lady the price of these jewels she always replies, smiling:

"It cost me ten months of prison."

This is the answer to the enigma. Usually Mme. de— spends 10,000*l*. a year. Last year, just as every one was leaving town for the summer, a jeweller came to the house with the famous necklace.

"How much does it cost?"

"10,000*l*, madame."

"That is a great deal. I have not that much," replied the beautiful Russian.

The jeweller was leaving, when a bright idea seized her.

"Could you keep this necklace for me ten months?"

After that time I will buy it."

The merchant asked nothing better, and the bargain was closed.

Mme. de— went to the convent of the Abbaye-au-Bois, where she stayed ten months. She dismissed friends, servants, coachmen, cooks, gave up the house, and all her luxury. The result was she saved the 10,000*l*, and with it bought the necklace.

The officials at a station in the neighbourhood of Ludlow have been sorely puzzled for several weeks by some extraordinary telegraph signalling from a neighbouring station. The bell was frequently rung, but when the signal was returned it met with no response. At length a mouse was discovered in the box, and his telegraphing propensities were speedily put an end to.

"Has that girl got fits?" asked an old farmer, who had paused to see a young lady go through with her calisthenic exercises in the door-yard. "No," replied the servant-girl, "that's jiminy-nastics." "So," said the farmer, in a pitying tone, "poor thing; how long's she had 'em?"

"REALLY, my dear," said poor Mr. Jones to his "butter-half," "you have sadly disappointed me. I once considered you a jewel of a woman, but you've turned out only a bit of matrimonial paste." "Then, my love," was the reply, "console yourself with the idea that paste is very adhesive and will stick to you as long as you live."

A TEACHER, in trying to explain passive verbs to a class, said to one of the boys, "Now, observe: If I say, 'John is beaten,' what is John's relation to the verb?" "John gets kicked," answered the boy. "No, no, you blockhead; what does John do?" "I don't know, unless he hollers!"

THE other day we heard a good story of a newly-enfranchised elector, who for the first time was being canvassed for his vote. The individual in question is employed as a labourer in a large establishment in town, and had been seized hold of by an

official in the same work, who is understood to have been "retained" by the committee of one of the candidates for the Kilmarnock Burghs. For some time he listened patiently to a recital of the honourable candidate's merits. At length, however, the canvasser, thinking he had made an impression, paused for a reply. "Och, sure," says the voter, "an' I don't know nothin' about the man yer spakins' of, but ye may put me down for sixpence." The poor man thought it was a subscription that was being raised for some fellow-workman or other who had been injured.

ACCORDING TO PRIORITY.

During the late North Norfolk election, the following dialogue occurred at the Ormesby polling-booth, between the poll-clerk and an elector:—

Poll-clerk: "Who do you vote for?"

Electors: "Wall, I don't kna. Hoo's cum forred?"

Poll-clerk: "Wodehouse and Gurdon, Lacom and Walpole."

Electors: "Wall, I shall wote for Wodhus an' Gurdon, as they cum fust."

A QUAKER, on hearing a man swear at a particularly bad piece of road, said: "Friend, I am under the greatest obligation to thee. I would myself have done what thou hast done, but my religion forbids me. Don't let my conscience, however, bribe thee; give thine indignation wings, and suffer not the prejudice of others to paralyse the tongue of justice and long suffering—yea, verily."

THE following advertisement recently appeared in a morning newspaper: "A father wants to find a school for his son, where a manly and useful education will be given him, and where the teachers do not fill the heads of their pupils with humbug stories about nations that died and were buried thousands of centuries ago, not a citizen of which could either run a steamboat or keep a hotel."

THE MILLER AND THE FOOL.—A miller, who attempted to be witty at the expense of a youth of weak intellect, accosted him with: "John, people say that you are a fool." On this John replied: "I don't know that I am, sir; I know some things, sir, and some things I don't know, sir." "Well, John, what do you know?" "I know that millers always have fat hogs, sir?" "And what don't you know?" "I don't know whose corn they eat, sir."

HOW TO OBTAIN CHIGNONS.

A lady, apparently about 30 years of age, entered the Marylebone Police-court a few days ago, and informed Mr. Mansfield she wished to make an application. She said:

"I have come to ask you to grant a summons against a hairdresser for cutting off my hair. I went to his shop last week to have my hair dressed, and on my return home my servant discovered that a portion of the hair on the right side had been cut off. I went to the shop again, and had my hair dressed by the assistant. When my servant came to do my hair she found a piece had been cut off the other side."

Mr. Mansfield: "It is the most extraordinary application I ever heard. If you think you have sustained any injury or loss, you had better go to the county court."

Applicant: "No, it is stealing. You see, sir, these hairdressers take a piece of hair off one lady's head, and a piece off another, and then they make up into curls and sell them." (Laughter.)

Mr. Mansfield: "Might not your servant have cut it?"

Applicant: "Oh, dear, no. I am certain that it was not my servant."

Mr. Mansfield: "What amount of damage do you suppose you have sustained?"

Applicant: "I cannot tell."

Mr. Mansfield: "I will tell you what to do. Go to the county court and take out a plaint against either the master or the assistant, laying your damage at say 10*l*."

Applicant: "But you see, sir, it is stealing."

Mr. Mansfield: "I cannot help you."

Applicant: "Thank you."

A CERTAIN CURE FOR CHIGNONS.—"Whatever would girls say if heaven had made them with lumps growing out of the backs of their heads? They would go into a hospital and take chloroform and have them off rather than be disgraced for life. There is nothing better than poultices night and morning to reduce the inflammation and get the swelling down. One of my girls has persevered in this simple treatment and her head is now its natural size.—Yours, &c.—A Father of Ten."

WHAT HE THOUGHT IT WAS.—A passenger by a night train tells the following: The train was detained for a little while, and while waiting, a cattle train came on the other track and stopped. Such a noise has seldom been heard: the cattle bellowed.

the sheep set up a bleating, and the hogs grunted, until the passengers were nearly crazed. One old fellow had slept for hours, but this noise awoke him. Rubbing his eyes, he listened in amazement. "Good heaven!" says he, "what's this?" Peering into the darkness without regarding anything, and listening more critically, he at last satisfied himself, and set the passengers roaring by the exclamation, "Why, this must be a political convention."

DANIEL WEBSTER AT HARVEST WORK.

During one of the college vacations, Daniel Webster and his brother returned to his father's at Salisbury. Thinking he had a right to some return for the money he had expended on their education, the father put scythes into their hands and ordered them to mow.

Daniel made a few sweeps, and then resting his scythe, wiped the perspiration from his brow. His father said:

"What's the matter, Dan?"

"My scythe doesn't hang right, sir," he answered. His father fixed it, and Dan went to work again, but with no better success. Something was the matter with the scythe, and then it was again tinkered; but it was not long before it wanted fixing again, and the father said, in a pet:

"Well, hang it to suit yourself."

Daniel, with great composure, hung it on the next tree.

As an old woman was recently walking through one of the streets of Montreal at midnight, a patrol called out, "Who's there?" "It's only me—don't be afraid!"

THE papers announce a large "condensed milk trade." We thought there was. Our milkman commonly condenses his milk into the smallest space, and expands the chalk and water indefinitely.

DANGERS OF A LOFTY STYLE (STILL).

Coming into court one day, Erskine perceived the ankle of Mr. Balfour, who generally expressed himself in a very circumlocutory manner, tied up with a silk handkerchief.

"Why, what's the matter?" said Erskine.

"I was taking a romantic ramble in my brother's grounds," replied Balfour, "when, coming to a gate, I had to climb over it, by which I came in contact with the first bar, and grazed the epidermis of my leg, which has caused a slight extravasation of blood."

"You may thank your lucky stars," said Erskine, "that your brother's gate was not as lofty as your style, or you must have broken your neck."

DELIGHTFUL FAMILY RECREATION.

Freeman: "I'm very anxious to go home, sir, for an old friend is going to California, and I wish particularly to see him."

Professor: "Well, really, Mr. Bloke, I can't see any urgent necessity for your proposed absence. Now, if your father or mother had died, I should have been delighted."

AN ALARMING STATE OF THINGS.—We understand that Mr. Newdegate intends to move for a Royal Commission to inquire into the management of the New Meat Market. He has been led to adopt this course by the fact that it is reported that a return to the "good old times" of Queen Mary seems highly probable, now that Smithfield is again made the site of the stake (steak).—*Fun*.

ST. JAMES'S AND ST. GILES'S.

Little Girl: "Ap'ny dip—two hounces best fresh—quarter 'poun' yaller soap—fard'sworth mixed pins—and a soft-roed sodger—and mother'll pay a' Saturday night."

Afole Dealer: "Certingly, miss—where can I ave the pleasure of sendin' 'em?"—*Fun*.

A TIDY GUESS.

Mary Jane (who is fresh from London, and never saw the Sea until last night, when the tide was in): "Lor, mum, what a pity! ain't they bin and turned the water off?"—*Fun*.

SLATED.

Girl: "Please, sir, mother says, what is the coals now?"

Retail Vendor: "One-and-fivepence a hundred."

Girl: "Oh, how dear! The last was only one-and-twopence."

R.V.: "Very true; but you must know that coals is coals now."

Girl: "Oh! won't mother be glad; she said the last was all slate."—*Fun*.

WATCH UP TO?—What is the difference between a Co. and a Chronometer? The former stops in order to take the benefit of the Winding-up Act, and the latter takes the benefit of the winding-up act in order not to stop.—*Fun Almanack*.

A HOARSE WHISPER.—It is astonishing how small a foundation rumour requires. It was reported the

other day that there was a screw loose in Rawbone's affairs, but it simply arose from the fact that he had turned his saddle-horse out to grass.—*Fun Almanack*.

AMONG the fair sex a fancy for the turf is happily the exception, not the rule. They don't want to be put up to "a wrinkle."—*Fun Almanack*.

NOT even the robes of the Sovereign were present at the opening of Parliament. Perhaps Her Majesty is so pleased with the people's Representatives that she does not wish to bring their debates to a close. [Surely "Close" is not meant by the writer.—Ed.]—*Tomahawk*.

A WELL-KNOWN and generous Irishman has refused the Chief Commissionership of the Metropolitan Police (offered to him in anticipation of Sir Richard's resignation) because he declared that he "would rather be any thing than *Maysie*!"—*Tomahawk*.

MUCH TO BE DESIRED.—It is an advantage to the Ministerial Party in the House to have Playfair. Let us hope they will have the farther advantage of Fair Play.—*Punch*.

TO THE MUSICAL WORLD.—"A Bewildered Musician," who has been constrained to hear a great deal about the Cattle Show, would be glad to be informed what sort of an instrument the "Scotch-Horn" is.—*Punch*.

WILL HIS SECRETARY TELL US?—At one stage of the elaborate rites and ceremonies which protect the British Constitution, when a New Parliament is provided with a Speaker, he presents himself in a "bob-wig." The question has been asked, whether it is so called as only costing a shilling?—*Punch*.

MR. PEABODY.—We have been thinking how to word an acknowledgment to the noble-hearted American who has just increased his donation to the London poor (not paupers) to \$50,000. We think this will do. "He may have the Body of a Pea, but, by Jove, he has the Soul of a Bean!" (For the information of posterity, a Bean means the same as a Brick, and that is the highest form of eulogy known to the nineteenth century.)—*Punch*.

THE ACORN'S LESSON.

A COUNTRY clown, reflecting once

Upon a pumpkin (thoughtful dance!)

Was fain to chide Omnipotence

As clearly wanting common sense.

"Had I," said he, "the world arranged,

Some things, at least, I would have changed;

This pumpkin here, so large and round,

Would not have grown upon the ground,

But yonder oak, whose branches spread

Their giant arms above my head,

Had borne the fruit, which one may see

Would well become so large a tree;

While acorns—had the power been mine—

Had fitly graced the tender vine.

It seems to me the plainest case,

That both are greatly out of place;

If "Providence," whom parsons praise

As wondrous wise in all his ways,

Had but consulted me, I ween

Things in their order we had seen;

Then in their due proportion all

Had been adjusted, large and small;

And wondering Wisdom had not found

The pumpkin growing on the ground,

Nor haply laughed aloud to see

The acorn pendant from a tree!"

Fatigued with thoughts so sage and deep,

The clown was now inclined to sleep;

And so beneath the shady oak

He laid him down—but soon awoke;

For on his face, by luckless hap,

The acorn falling broke his nap,

And oke his nose! from whence the blood

Was streaming in a tiny flood!

"Zooks!" cried the clown—who greatly feared

A mortal wound, till in his beard

He spied the cause of all his woe—

The acorn that had struck the blow,—

"Good lack!" he muttered, "I have found

Why pumpkins grow upon the ground!

For if they grew on oaks instead,

Where now had been my foolish head!"

J. G. S.

GEMS.

He who throws out suspicions, should at once be suspected himself.

THE friend that hides from us our faults is of less service to us than the enemy that upbraids us with them.

A MAN'S troubles are born and grow with him; by habit he becomes able to endure them. They go out of the common track to speculate upon hap-

piness, not only have, but deserve, a larger share of misfortune than they who keep on the well-known beaten track, contented with being moderately happy.

WHAT we hope or fear may not come to pass. No human scheme can be so accurately projected, but some little circumstance intervening may spoil it.

HE that hath pity on another man's sorrow shall be free from it himself; and he that delighteth in and scorneth the misery of another, shall at one time or other fall into the same gulf.

THE poor man who envies not the rich, who pities his companions in poverty, and who can spare something for him who is still poorer, is in the realms of humanity, a king of kings.

"A GREAT LIE," says the poet Crabbe, "is like a great fish on dry land; it may fret and fling, and make a frightful bother, but it cannot hurt you. You have only to keep still and it will die of itself."

A PEACEFUL disposition is not absolute protection against the turmoils of life. What's more peaceful than a clam? And yet, ten to one it ends its life in a broil. And then how peaceable an oyster is! And yet how frequently it gets mixed up in a stew.

STATISTICS.

It appears from a parliamentary return that the railway companies of the United Kingdom hold more than 289 square miles of land:—213.2 in England and Wales, 88.5 in Scotland, and 88 in Ireland. The quantity is one acre to every 273 in England and Wales, one of every 813 in Scotland, one of every 853 in Ireland; or, taking the United Kingdom as a whole, one of 421 acres. The total is equal to 12.32 acres per lineal mile of railway, or an average width of land of 102 ft. for every railway.

THERE are in the United Kingdom 90,668 miles of telegraph wire for public use, and 4,969 miles of wire used for the purposes of railway companies only. The number of miles of posts and underground lines constructed is 21,761 open to the public, and 285 used for railway purposes only; the average number of wires per mile is 4.16. There are 4,695 miles of submarine telegraph cables (of course including the Atlantic cables) connected with places in the United Kingdom, and 8,146 miles of wire; the average number of these wires per mile is 1.73. There are 3,381 telegraph stations open to the public.

MISCELLANEOUS.

OF the new members one of them is the proprietor of a lunatic asylum, so that the "lunatic interest" will be duly represented in the new Parliament.

It is reported that a large increase in the list of Generals will shortly be made. If so, a number of appointments will be at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief.

THE Parliament of the Isle of Man has recently passed a law punishing, by a small fine, anyone found in possession of a gull, its plumage, or eggs. By gull is meant all the gull tribe. Of course, without political significance.

Is the labour of musical study, like that of politics, conducive to a long life? We have no record that it wears out a man's powers prematurely; at all events we have notable examples to bear witness to the contrary. Meyerbeer, like Grétry, attained 72 years, Handel lived to 74, Gluck to 75, Haydn to 77, and Auber, who is in his 87th year, is still hale and hearty.

THE lengthened action of "Johnstone v. Cottam," in which one clergyman sued another for 5,000*l.* damages for assault and imprisonment, was recently brought to a close. The assault and imprisonment consisted in placing the plaintiff in a lunatic asylum. Chief Justice Cockburn summed up at some length, and the jury, after a deliberation of nearly an hour, found for the defendant.

AMONG the gifts to a newly-married pair at a town in New Jersey, the other evening, was a broom sent to the lady, accompanied with the following sentiment:—

This trifling gift accept from me,
Its use I would commend;
In sunshine use the brushy part,
In storms the other end.

It is said that Mr. Chaplin, M.P., is going to follow the example of his deceased rival, the Marquis of Hastings, and to dispose of the whole of his horses in training, which will come to Messrs. Tattersall's hammer the first vacant opportunity they have. The Hermit, it is believed, is kept back, as the Squire of Blankney wishes to retain him as a souvenir of his extraordinary Derby.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
THE FLAW IN THE DIAMOND ... 265	MADAME DE LAPAYETTE ... 265
THE TORPEDO ... 265	PACIFIC ... 265
THE COUNTERS OF DEATH ... 265	THE AGRICULTURAL ... 265
WENTWATER ... 265	GEMS ... 265
HEART'S CONTENT ... 265	STATISTICS ... 265
WIDOWS' WEEDS ... 265	MISCELLANEOUS ... 265
A BALL-ROOM BRAVO ... 265	
THE BIRTH OF WORDS ... 265	
IDENTITY OF BELGIUM ... 265	
TRIBUTES ... 265	
MICHEL-DEVER ... 265	
THE FLOWER GIRL ... 265	
MAKING THE MOST OF A CORPSE ... 265	
SCIENCE ... 265	
ORIGIN OF PETROLEUM ... 265	
THE CHAUCER WINDOW ... 265	
SOMETHING SAPHIRE ... 265	
SOMETHING FAIR ... 265	
SIR ALVICK ... 265	

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALBERT.—Palestine means the land of shepherds, and was so called from its abundant pasturage.

PAUL.—The word Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, and signifies a Saviour.

JANE.—Gold is the only idol that is worshipped in all lands without a temple, and by all sects without hypocrisy.

MARIAN.—*Lebensm* is a German word signifying a hymn or song of praise; and *lieb*, also German, means a song.

M. R.—Edward Young, D.D., author of the "Night Thoughts," was born in 1684, and died in 1766.

EDWARD.—*Novas*, in the Roman calendar, were the fifth day of each month, excepting March, May, July, and October, when they fall on the seventh day.

LAVIN.—The cap of maintenance chapeau of estate is made of crimson velvet, turned up with ermine. It was formerly a symbol of high rank and dignity.

ADA.—A maxim is sometimes like the seed of a plant which the soil it is thrown into must expand into leaves, flowers, and fruit.

AGNES.—If you would add lustre to your other accomplishments, study a modest behaviour. To excel in anything that is valuable is great, but to be above conceits on account of one's accomplishments is greater.

SPRINGFIELD.—To make a spirit polish; take 2 lbs. of shellac, 1 oz. each of powdered mastic and sandarach, half-a-pint of oil of varnish, and 1 gallon of spirits of wine; digest in the cold till dissolved.

H. M. J.—Your question has been repeatedly replied to in these columns, but we will again furnish the requisite information. It is as follows: a mixture of honey and eggs, well beaten together, or raw eggs alone.

WHEATCROFT.—To make a good pomade: take 4 oz. of castor oil, 2 oz. of prepared lard, 2 oz. of white wax, 2 drachms of bergamot, and 20 drops of oil of lavender; melt the fat together, when cool add the scents, and stir till cold.

LEONIE MAGUIRE.—1. The following mixture in your case will afford relief: 2 oz. of the best honey, and 1 oz. of castor oil, well mixed; a teaspoonful to be taken night and morning. 2. Handwriting clear and distinct.

A. SUMMERHAY.—1. Gunner is a science. Your question would require a column of our space. Purchase the numbers of Chambers's cheap Cyclopaedia, under the letters G, A, and Q. 2. Nothing is done by guess in that arm of the service, but all by sight and calculation.

A. R. Q.—Write to the editor of the *Shipping Gazette*, stating your reason for putting the question, and he will probably reply. Your better course, however, would be to call at the office, and ask permission to search his register. Better still would it be to apply at the office of the ship's owner, or agents.

HENRY JAMES JACKSON.—The property would, without doubt, go to the posthumous child, as the heir of his father; for the fact of the father dying before the birth of his own son would not disinherit the latter, unless especially so stated in the will of the testator, which is not the case in the statement you have sent us.

ROSEAL.—A woman who is not essentially kind-hearted cannot be a good housekeeper, and a woman who has not judgment, firmness, foresight, and general good sense, cannot manage a house prudently or comfortably.

ROBERT.—The examination of storekeepers in the Military Store Service, consists of handwriting, orthography, and grammatical correctness, elementary arithmetic, and book-keeping by single entry. Age between twenty-five and forty.

CHARLOTTE.—A distaff is the staff to which hemp, flax, wool, or other substances to be spun are fastened. The art of spinning with it, at the small wheel, was first taught to Englishwomen by Anthony Bonavia, an Italian. The distaff is used as an emblem of the female sex.

MICHAEL.—Easter Island, in the Pacific Ocean, was discovered by Davis in 1666; it was visited by Roggewein in 1722, and from him obtained the name it now bears; it was visited by Captain Cook, in 1774. At the south-eastern extremity is the crater of an extinguished volcano, about two miles in circuit, and 800 feet deep.

M. M.—The fundamental portions of the great charter of English liberty, called "Magna Charta," was signed by King John, at Runnymede, near Windsor; it was many times confirmed, and as frequently violated, by Henry III. This last king's grand charter was granted in 1225 and was assented by Edward I.

J. A. W.—1. We know of no "club," properly so called. Several of the People's Parks, however, have a space allotted and fitted up with every requisite for gymnastic exercises, for youths of the working classes; for instance, there is a capital one in Kennington Park, which, by the way, is not far from your home. 2. The hours would suit you in the

summer months; but not in the winter, as during that period the gates are opened later and closed earlier by some hours. 3. The Chinese annals claim for their empire an antiquity of from 80,000 to 100,000 years B.C. The historian, Suetonius, bases the first dates of his history at 601 B.C. Other authorities give the date at 2,500 B.C.; and others, that it was founded by Fohi (supposed to be the Noah of the Bible), 2,940 B.C. The latter is most likely to be the correct date. 4. Light suppers are not injurious; remember the old saw—"After dinner sit a while, after supper walk a mile."

ISAAC TELFORD.—By the words given, your admirer made an effort to symbolise his love for you. Poetically, however, his remarks are not quite in place, or, at all events, not in the best taste, for he compares himself to a parasite, and you to an oak.

CARLOS.—Macadamising is a system of road-making devised by Mr. John Macadam, and published by him in an essay, in 1819; having practised it in Ayrshire. He received a grant of 10,000*l.* from parliament, and was appointed surveyor-general of the metropolitan roads in 1837. He died in 1836.

LEAH.—The word Bible means book, and is derived from the Greek word for papyrus, the Egyptian plant from which paper was made in ancient times. A written roll of this was called a book; therefore, when the scriptures, or collection of sacred writings, were translated into Greek, in the third century before Christ, and united in one volume; it was emphatically styled "The Book," signifying "The best of books."

POETRY.—"Happiness," by Sarah Ogall; "New Year's Day," by G. White; "The Miner's Boy," by E. D. C. Burnard; "On the Way," by M. E.; "Good-Bye to Lizzie Lee," by Fred. C.; "A Scene at Sea," and "Lines during a Storm," by a retired Sailor, were an unwillingly compelled to decline, some being too lengthy, and others not quite up to our standard.

THE FLOWER GIRL.—1. For pains in the head: take half-pint of rose-water, and add 2 to 3 teaspoonfuls of white vinegar, to form a lotion: apply it to the part affected 3 or 4 times a day. It requires fresh linen and lotion at each application; in two or three days this will gradually take the pain away. 2. Handwriting good.

M. R. D.—To remove pimples, the following lotion will prove efficacious: 2 grains of sublimate of mercury and half-a-pint of almond mixture, used occasionally. 2. Exercise in the open air, moderation in eating and drinking, with early rising and retiring, are the best means to produce a clear complexion.

MY LADY SLEEPS.

Sleep sound, dear love! Though the winds be high,
And the dark clouds drift through the troubled sky,
Though the rising waters foam and roar,
And mournfully howl round the tortured shore;
Hill sounds from thy slumbers be far away,
And soft be thy dreams as a summer day!

Sleep sound! Though the world be weary with fears,
And eyes that love thee be and with tears,
Yet never a sorrow break thy rest,
And never a pang about thy breast,
No shadow pass o'er thy closed eyes,
But their visions be visions of Paradise!

Sleep sound, sweet love! Till the morning light
Lead up the new day, with its fresh delight;
Till the welcome sun, as it mounts above,
Recall thee to duty, and peace, and love,
To calm existence, untouched by strife,
And the quiet round of a holy life!

C. A. L.

OWEN.—*Cuirass* was a part of armour much in use among the Greeks and Romans. The skins of boars, and afterwards tanned leather, formed the cuirass of the Britons until the Anglo-Saxons; it was afterwards made of iron and brass, and covered with a warrior from neck to waist, before and behind; it was worn by the heavy cavalry in the reign of Henry III.

MARTHA.—Dunmow, in Essex, is a town famous for the tenure of the manor, viz. "That whatever married couple will go to the priory, and kneeling on two sharp-pointed stones, will swear that they have not quarrelled, nor repented of their marriage within a year and a day after its celebration, shall receive a dish of bacon." This custom was instituted by Robert de Fitzwalter in 1244.

ALLER.—The cypress or *cypripedium sempervirens*, is a tree whose wood has an agreeable smell, and scarcely ever decays or takes the worm; it was originally found in the island of Cyprus. The Athenians buried their heroes in coffins made of this wood, of which many of the Egyptian mummy-chests were also fabricated. The ancients planted it in cemeteries. It was brought to England about A.D. 1441. The deciduous cypress, or *cypripedium disticha*, came from North America about the year 1640.

PAMELA.—Costermongers are itinerant dealers in fruit, vegetables, &c., deriving their name, it is said, from *Costard*, a favourite apple. The London costermongers are frequently useful in relieving the markets, and were said in 1860 to possess a floating capital of 2,000,000*l.*; previous to fasting and thanksgiving days, they sell the appointed forms of prayers in great numbers. In 1860 they held a meeting, in order to represent to the city authorities the hardships they felt, by the police checking their means of livelihood.

MARK.—Mace, a weapon anciently used by the cavalry of most nations, was originally a spiked club, hung at the end of a bow, formed of metal. Maces were also early designs of authority, borne before officers of state, the top being made in the form of an open crown. The Lord Chancellor and Speaker of the House of Commons have maces borne before them. Edward III. granted to London the privilege of having gold or silver maces carried before the lord mayor, sheriffs, aldermen, and corporation.

A BIRD FANCIER.—Especially care must be taken to keep canaries scrupulously clean; the cage should be strewn every morning with clean sand, or rather fine gravel, for small pebbles are absolutely essential to life and health in canaries; for water must be given every day, both for drinking and bathing; during the moulting season, a small piece of iron should be put in the water placed for drinking. The food should consist principally of summer rape seed, that is, of those small brown rape seeds which are obtained from plants sown in the spring, and which ripen during the

summer; a little chickweed in spring, lettuce leaves in summer, and endive in autumn, with slices of sweet apple in winter, may be safely given, but bread and sugar ought to be avoided. During the winter, the cage should never be hung in a room without a fire, but even then, when the air is mild, and the sun shines brightly, the bird will be refreshed by having the window open. The cage should not be less than 8 inches in diameter, and a foot high, with perches at different heights.

STEPHEN.—The spinning machine, called a mule, was invented in 1779, by Samuel Crompton, born at Bolton, Lancashire, in 1753. From the name of his residence he termed the machine "Hall-in-the-Wood Wheel." It was also called mule-spinning, from its giving birth to the British mule and cambric manufacture; but from its combining the advantages of Hargreave's spinning jenny, and Arkwright's adaptation, it derived the name of mule. It produced yarn treble the fineness, and very much softer than any ever before produced in England. The self-acting mule was invented in 1825.

JULIA.—A *Breviary* (so called as being an abridgement of the books used in the Roman Catholic service) contains the seven canonical hours, viz. matins, or lauds, primes, terce, sexte, none, vespers, and complines. Its origin is ascribed to Pope Gelasius I., about 492; it was first called the *custos*, and afterwards the breviary; both the clergy and laity use it publicly and at home. It was in use among the ecclesiastical orders about 1080, and was reformed by the councils of Trent and Cologne, by Pius V., Urban VIII., and other popes. The quality of type in which the breviary was first printed gave the name to the type called "brevier."

W. MORLEY. twenty, and will have some money soon.

HARRY BROOKS. eighteen, rather tall, fair, with good prospects in life.

JOSEPH BATHURST. twenty-four, 5 ft. 10 in. Respondent must be respectably connected.

R. VINEY. fair, 4 ft. 9 in., and handsome. Respondent must be pretty.

FLYING JIM JACK. twenty, 5 ft. 7 in., fair, auburn hair, blue eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be pretty, domesticated, and fond of children.

W. S. WHITE. nineteen, 5 ft. 4 in., hazel eyes, fair, dark hair, and good looking. Respondent must be about eighteen.

ELIZA. seventeen, 4 ft. 11 in., dark, and respectably connected. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, and be about twenty-three.

M. A. W. tall, fair, good looking, domesticated, fond of home, and very affectionate. Respondent must be tall, dark, and good looking.

LEONIE A. B. nineteen, dark hair and eyes, respectably connected, and very domesticated. Respondent must be tall; a sailor preferred.

ANNE D. and HARRIET.—"Anne D." tall, good tempered, and very domesticated. Respondent must be respectable, and a tradesman. "Harriet," twenty, tall, and fair. Respondent must be about twenty-two.

D. GRAHAM and DUNCAN MCGREGOR.—"D. Graham," twenty-two, tall, 5 ft. 11 in., dark, good looking, and in good circumstances. Respondent must be fair, well educated, and domesticated. "Duncan McGregor," twenty-one, 5 ft. 8 in., and fair. Respondent must be dark.

KATE, MARY, and MAGGIE.—"Kate," nineteen, 5 ft. 4 in., blue eyes, fair hair, domesticated, cheerful disposition, fond of home, music, and dancing. "Mary," seventeen, 5 ft. 4 in., blue eyes, golden hair, has a small fortune, and fond of music and drawing. "Maggie," nineteen, 5 ft., dark hair and eyes, fond of home and singing. Respondent must be well connected; money no object.

MERRY JACK, BOOM TRIGGER, FORT GUT, and TRUCK and FUNNELL TAD.—"Merry Jack," twenty-one, medium height, auburn hair, blue eyes. Respondent must be fond of home and music. "Boom Trigger," twenty, dark hair, hazel eyes, 5 ft. 6 in., good tempered. Respondent must be fond of home and domesticated. "Fort Gut," nineteen, 5 ft. 6 in., dark eyes, brown eyes. Respondent must be a tradesman, fond of home, and good-tempered. "Truck and Funnell Tad," eighteen, auburn hair, blue eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be a dressmaker.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

JAMES SANDERS is responded to by—"Nellie," (a grocer's daughter), tall, and good looking.

W. J. by—"Ella," medium height, good looking, and respectably connected.

MAUD by—"J. P.," 5 ft. 7 in., fair, handsome, good tempered, and fond of home; and—"J. H. Richards," twenty-one, tall, handsome, respectably connected, and in receipt of 180*l.* per annum.

MARY by—"Richard Moore," twenty, 5 ft. 10 in., black hair, dark eyes, and handsome.

LIZZIE by—"Happy-go-Lucky," nineteen, 5 ft. 7 in., dark hair, hazel eyes, good tempered, fond of home and music.

LIZZIE S. by—"E. R.," twenty-five, tall, dark, in good circumstances, and about to go abroad in a few months.

CHARLES CONVENT by—"Lilly," brown hair, blue eyes, and pretty.

FREDERICK by—"Rose," fair, blue eyes, fond of home and music, and pretty.

H. J. MITCHELL by—"W. R. B.," twenty-two, 5 ft. 9 in., amiable, fond of music and home.

JESSIE MARIAN by—"R. E.," steady, good looking, and has good expectations.

PART LXVIII. for JANUARY, is NOW READY. Price 6d. * * * Now Ready, Vol. XI. of THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to Vol. XI. Price ONE PENNY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

* * * We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 334 Strand, by J. WATSON.